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THE HUMANITY OF THE CHRIST

GERRIT HUYSER

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THE HUMANITY OF THE CHRIST

And Other Essays

BY

GERRIT HUYSER



BOSTON

RICHARD G. BADGER

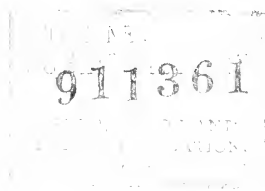
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DEDICATION

WHEN the publisher's kindly insistence finally induced me to try and prepare a volume for publication, I assured my dearly beloved life-companion that I would dedicate it to her.

Now that she has gone to her eternal home, I can only dedicate it to the blessed memory of one who, wherever in these Northwestern States, her husband was called to labor, was not only always his faithful and heroic fellow-worker; but who did everything in her power to further his usefulness, and who was ever the friend and helper of the needy and the distressed.

In her going hence she illustrated in a wonderful way that beautiful Oriental poem, translated by Sir William Jones from the Sanscrit of Calidasa:

“On parents’ knees, a naked, new-born child,
Weeping thou satst when all around thee smiled:
So live, that, sinking in thy last long sleep,
Thou then mayst smile while all around thee weep.”

Deprived of the power of speech during the last few weeks, because of a slight paralytic stroke, she literally smiled her life away; smiling at those who waited on her, smiling at the friends who came to see her, and smiling at her husband as he tried, as best he might, to repeat to her the precious promises of Holy Writ, and some of those blessed hymns, that she had so long loved to sing; and, lo, ere we knew, her gentle spirit had been wafted away to that better country, where God Himself shall wipe away every tear!

My darling wife, fare thee well!

Thou art gone from me, but not for ever. We shall meet again, in the sweet by and by, on the evergreen shore, where parting shall be no more!

PREFACE

IN regard to the discourses contained in this volume the author simply wishes to say that it has been his life-long endeavor to bear in mind that Heaven's ambassador should ever and always hide himself behind the cross, and that the salvation of souls is the one supreme object of preaching. And he makes humble and grateful acknowledgment to the God of all grace, that the Holy Spirit, whenever the people have had a mind to the work, has most graciously, and at times in a wonderful way, blessed the delivery of these and like sermons to the comforting and upbuilding of believers, and to the conversion of many that were without, both old and young.

As to the many Scriptural quotations, it is proper to state that, unless otherwise noted, these are invariably taken from the American Standard Edition of the Revised English Bible.

The author takes for granted that the reader has a right to know what version a writer follows. It seems exceedingly strange that reputable writers sometimes leave their readers entirely in the dark

as to all that; quoting this or that translation, or even giving their own version, without definite information in every case. But it seems to us a thing far more unaccountable, that so many excellent scholars, both in their preaching and in writing for the press, should, even at this late day, still cling with such a strange tenacity to this miscalled Authorized Version; which, notwithstanding its being a well-nigh undefiled well of noble English, is, in many ways, altogether out of date. True it is that our R. V. is not absolutely perfect, which simply means, as says *The Westminster Confession of Faith*, that the Hebrew and Greek Scriptures, "being immediately inspired of God, and by His singular care and providence kept pure in all ages, are therefore authentic, so as, in all controversies of religion, the Church is finally to appeal unto them." Our American Revised Version is, however, far and away the most accurate and best translation in the possession of the English-speaking world, and it does seem a great pity that the Protestant Church has not long since unanimously adopted it for all ordinary purposes.

To mention only a few out of a thousand and one instances, and these are by no means always among the most vital, surely no good reason can be given why the common people should not be al-

lowed to read, e. g., "In the beginning God created," not, the heaven, but "*the heavens* and the earth" (Gen. I:1). In Ex. III:15, "Jehovah, the God of your fathers." In Ex. VI:2 "I am Jehovah," and so elsewhere. In Ps. VIII "O Jehovah, our Lord." And in Ps. CX:1,

"Jehovah saith unto my Lord, Sit Thou at My
right hand,
Until I make Thine enemies Thy footstool."

In Prov. IV:18,

"But the path of the righteous is as the *dawning*
light,
That shineth more and more unto the perfect
day."

Nor is there any valid excuse for still telling us, that our Lord bade us not to be careful about the morrow, when what He did say was that we are not to be "*anxious* for the morrow (Matt. VI: 34). So should the apostle be allowed to exhort us, "Casting all your *anxiety* upon Him, because He careth for you" (I. Pet. V:7). And to think of continuing any longer to compel the evangelist to make the utterly absurd statement, that Mary of Bethany, when her sister Martha had gone out to meet their anxiously looked-for Teacher, *sat still*,

perfectly composed in body and mind, when what he did say was simply this, "Mary *still sat* in the house" (John XI:20). There is, however, a far more serious matter than any of these, which affects the recognition of the personality of the Third Person of the adorable Godhead. Even the learned revisers have failed to fully rectify our noble English Bible in this respect, and yet we owe them undying thanks, especially the British revisers, to whom the change in this case is primarily due, for having rid two memorable passages in the epistle to the Romans of that utterly obnoxious term, which the writer for one never allowed himself to read in public, before ever there was a revision of any sort, without solemn protest, viz., "itself," and where we are now privileged to read, "The Spirit *Himself* beareth witness with our spirit, that we are children of God; . . . And in like manner the Spirit also helpeth our infirmity: for we know not how to pray as we ought; but the Spirit *Himself* maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered" (Ch. VIII:16, 26).

The author can hardly expect, in spite of the utmost care in revising these discourses for the press, that he should entirely have escaped the common lot of man in making blunders; especially when he had to do this work with an aching heart:

but he humbly trusts that nothing of that will have obscured the following pages; for it ill becomes one who has, for, lo, these many years, been privileged to point the sorrowing and afflicted to an elder Brother Who careth for us, to obtrude his own sorrows upon his fellow-men, all of whom have enough of their own to struggle under; and so he has endeavored to bear in mind for himself, as well as for his sorrow-laden brethren and sisters in the Lord, that

“Like as a father pitieth his children,
So Jehovah pitieth them that fear Him.
For He knoweth our frame;
He remembereth that we are dust.”

(Ps. CIII:13-14).

“For He doth not afflict willingly,” in the Hebrew, “From His heart,” “nor grieve the children of men” (The Lamentations of Jeremiah, Ch. III: 33).

That He Who has so often blessed the spoken word may, of His infinite goodness, use these pages to the praise of His glory, is the sincere prayer of one who, by His amazing mercy and favor, is now eighty years young, with eyes undimmed and natural force unabated.

Detroit,

December, 1918.

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THE HUMANITY OF THE CHRIST

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John XI: 35. "*Jesus wept.*"

AMID the eminent characters, whose names are enrolled upon the page of history; among the many illustrious personages, who have indelibly enstamped the impress of their lives upon human destiny, there stands forth in bold relief, and in the solitary grandeur of a perfect manhood, matchless and inimitable in all the lineaments of His majestic glory, the Man Christ Jesus!

Oh! how the world's noblest characters dwindle into utter insignificance, and how is their glory obscured, when brought to the test of His spotless life! How trivial and how inane do the moral precepts of every ancient and modern philosopher prove themselves, when tried by the standard of His sublime teachings!

In the life of Jesus of Nazareth there is brought

to view both the strength and the gentleness, the majesty and the beauty of the perfect man.

What force of decision, what strength of purpose is revealed in that matchless character which the four evangelists have portrayed! To every temptation of Satan, to every blandishment of His human enemies, to every mistaken entreaty of His friends; in a word, to every thing that might in any wise have diverted Him from His chosen purpose, He unhesitatingly turned a deaf ear.

His indignant, piercing look; His language of scathing rebuke, and full of awful denunciation: how they struck terror into the hearts of the wicked! Where can be found more clearly than in the words of Christ, a true and lifelike delineation of the folly and the guilt of hypocrisy? How marked, how radical the distinction which is drawn between a mere outward conformity to ceremonial law, and a cordial obedience to all God's requirements, in these words of Christ, "Now ye the Pharisees cleanse the outside of the cup and of the platter: but your inward part is full of extortion and wickedness. Ye foolish ones, did not He that made the outside make the inside also? But woe unto you Pharisees! for ye tithe mint, and rue, and every herb, and pass over justice and the love of God: but these ought ye to have done, and not to

leave the other undone" (Luke XI:39-40, 42). Where was human pride ever more pointedly rebuked? and when were self-righteous accusers of their fellow-men more signally forced to condemn themselves, than when, as He sat in His Father's house, the Savior uttered that significant and heart-searching command, "He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her" (John VIII: 7)?

And yet the Man Christ Jesus, although thus severe in His denunciation of a mock piety; and though He indignantly unmasked the hypocrisy of those who esteemed themselves more righteous than others, while, in the sight of God, they were just as bad, or even much worse: yet—and herein appear the beauty and charming symmetry of His character—yet He was as quick to discern the least indication of true penitence, and was ever ready to throw the mantle of His abounding charity over the misdeeds of such as honestly desired to turn from their wicked ways. And so we find that no sooner had the self-righteous scribes and Pharisees, who had brought to Him a woman taken in adultery, one by one sneaked away from His presence, having been convicted of their own inward depravity, but we hear Jesus utter those gracious words, so full of sympathy as well as of warning for the fu-

ture, "Neither do I condemn thee: go thy way; from henceforth sin no more" (v. 11).

The Savior's heart overflowed with sympathy for human suffering and distress in every form. And the genuineness and strength of His fellow-feeling were clearly shown by this fact, so fully attested by the record of His life from day to day, viz., that He was always ready to raise up the fallen, to heal the diseased, whether of body or of mind, to speak the word of comfort to the sorrowing and the bereaved, and of encouragement to the faint-hearted and the weary.

As it is in our Lord's intercourse with the wicked spiritual rulers of the Jews, the scribes and Pharisees, that we behold in the strongest light the stern and ever unyielding principles that controlled His every act; as also His holy detestation of practical ungodliness, however masked or overlaid with pious pretensions: so it is in His intercourse with His three intimate friends in Bethany—in whose peaceful home He so often found repose—that we may see some of the most beautiful illustrations of all that is lovely and attractive in His untarnished humanity.

It is under the hospitable roof of Lazarus, of Martha and Mary; in the bosom of this congenial household, where neither of those twin off-

spring of the pit, jealousy or envy, was on the alert to whisper its foul and fiendish suspicions: but where there was that undefinable something which often draws pure souls, and that well-nigh involuntarily, into spontaneous sympathy with each other; it is there where the social nature of the Son of Man finds some of its freest, its most delightful occasions for self-manifestation.

And in the narrative contained in the 11th chapter of the Gospel according to John, in which occur the words of the text, how many and how varied are the glimpses given, how charming the delineations which the pen of the beloved disciple has portrayed, of the human character of our blessed Lord.

At this time we view Him under circumstances of strange and peculiar interest. On the other side of the river Jordan He has received that brief and touching message, so full of loving and confiding expectation, "Lord, behold, he whom Thou lovest is sick" (v. 3). Seemingly unmoved He simply utters the mysterious declaration, "This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God may be glorified thereby" (v. 4).

Yet the sick man dies, and now, after the body of His friend Lazarus has already lain in the tomb for four days, the Savior, accompanied by His

twelve disciples, may once more be seen approaching Bethany.

No sooner does Martha hear that Jesus is coming but she runs out to meet Him, and pours into His compassionate ear her plaintive, and almost reproachful, lamentation, "Lord, if Thou hadst been here, my brother had not died!" (v. 21).

After a brief and wonderful interview, in which He assures her that He Himself is "the resurrection and the life" (v. 25), she hastens back to the house, and whispers into her sister's ear that hope-inspiring message, "The Teacher is here, and calleth thee" (v. 28). And Mary rises up hastily to meet the ever welcome Guest, and, falling down at Jesus' feet, she too exclaims, "Lord, if Thou hadst been here, my brother had not died!"

"When Jesus therefore saw her weeping, and the Jews also weeping who came with her, He groaned in the Spirit, and was troubled, and said, Where have ye laid him? They say unto Him, Lord, come and see" (v's 33-34). And as they were leading Him to the tomb of His friend Lazarus "Jesus wept."

O what a scene was that! And how clearly does this incident in the earthly life of the Redeemer attest the reality of His human nature! What else could show us more conclusively, that the

Christ did not appear on earth, in what some have termed "an unreal veil of sense"? What better proof is needed that He did assuredly partake of flesh and blood?

To the patriarch Abraham, and to other of the saints during former dispensations, the Son of God Himself and His celestial messengers had frequently appeared in the likeness of our frail humanity. They gave utterance to the commands of Heaven, revealing the will of Deity to mortal man, and then quickly sped themselves back to their ethereal mansions. But Jesus of Nazareth had already spent thirty years upon this earth, growing up from earliest infancy to manhood's prime, before entering upon His public ministry. And now as that marvelous ministry of love and compassion is drawing to a close, we see Him going to the tomb of His friend Lazarus, His human soul moved at the sight of the weeping sisters, and of their weeping friends, and, lo, with their heart-breaking sobs are mingled the tears of the Man Christ Jesus!

Ah! this is not at all like the angelic appearances of any age. Nor is He Who goes weeping to yonder tomb in Bethany of Judea, simply the Son of God as once He stood with gracious condescension, yet with majestic mien, as "The Judge of all the earth" (Gen. XVIII:25), listening to Abra-

ham's plea for the guilty cities of the plain, or as He wrestled all night with Jacob by the brook Jabboc. No, this indeed is the Son of God, yet this is also the Son of Man.

When we behold the Savior mingling His tears with those of the sorrowing company which is slowly wending its way to the tomb of Lazarus, we begin to realize somewhat the preciousness of that truth, which is set forth by the apostle Paul, when he declares concerning the only begotten Son of God, "For verily not to angels doth He give help, but He giveth help to the seed of Abraham" (Heb. II:16). Yes, Christ became truly man, and in Him we perceive not only the sterner qualities of our nature, but likewise all the more gentle and winning graces of a sinless and perfect human character.

"Jesus wept." The absolute God, the all-creating, yet uncreated, Spirit, the Great Cause uncaused, the incomprehensible and infinite One, eternal and immutable in all the wonderful attributes of His matchless being: the human mind staggers at the very thought of God, and shrinks back with amaze and awe from His unseen presence. Yet, blessed be God! there is One Who, though He is "the effulgence of His glory, and the very image

of His substance, . . . upholding all things by the word of His power" (Heb. I:3), yet became for a while "a little lower than the angels" (Ch. II:7); and Who, whereas man had "flesh and blood, . . . also Himself in like manner partook of the same" (v. 14); nay, "emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of man" (Phil. II:7); and having thus veiled the dazzling glory of Deity under gentlest aspect of human form, He "went about doing good" (Acts X:38), everywhere administering the abundant consolations of His grace, healing the sick, giving hearing to the deaf, sight to the blind, raising the dead to life again, binding up every broken heart, and even mingling His tears with those of the sorrowing and the bereaved.

The perfect knowledge of God we cannot attain unto, it is too high for our weak perceptions: but the Son of God arrayed in human flesh and blood, with His human heart palpitating to every human woe, O here is something tangible! something that our weak senses can grasp! Yes, in Jesus Christ God has, in amazing condescension and love, let Himself down as it were to the feebleness of our comprehension! He is no longer a God afar off, but in the person of the Son He has come very close

to us, in having joined our frail human nature into eternal union with the Divine essence.

An eternal union! Yes, and in that union is included, not simply the soul, or spirit, but the whole man. When the Savior expired on Calvary His human spirit also descended to the abode of the dead, and His body was laid in the new hewn tomb of Joseph of Arimathæa; nevertheless the Holy One saw no corruption, but on the morning of the third day He broke asunder the bars of death; during the space of forty days He again and again showed Himself to His disciples in His thenceforth incorruptible and immortal human body; and then, as the heavens received Him out of their sight, He, the God-Man, ascended up to glory, far above all dominion, and power, and every name that is named; and in that same human body He shall yet again be seen, standing "upon the mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east" (Zech. XIV:4), and, possessed of His glorified human nature, He shall reign world without end, King of kings and Lord of lords.

In view of all this we may well be astounded at the honor which God has put upon the children of men, in having thus gloriously exalted our nature into everlasting union with the Divine. And so we may say with an old English writer,

“Twas much, that man was made like God before;
But, that God should be made like man, much
more.”¹

There has, alas! grown up in the Christian Church a strange, nay, even a contemptuous disesteem of the body. In the minds of multitudes of intelligent Christian people, the idea of the existence of a spirit in a physical organism seems to be inseparably associated with the idea of sin and consequent misery. And hence they suppose, when once they have got rid of this cumbrous clay, that then they will at once enter upon the fulness and perfection of their bliss and glory.

Let us now briefly consider how little ground there is, either in Scripture or in the nature of things, for such a conclusion.

How was it in the case of our first parents? Did not Jehovah God form the body of Adam first, and afterwards create the living soul to inhabit that tenement of clay? And were not Adam and Eve both spotless as they came forth from the plastic hand of Deity? Had not God made them in such a way, that they were fitted to exercise all the powers of their wonderfully composite being, physical as well as intellectual and spiritual, in per-

¹ John Donne, D.D.

fect conformity to His will? Because God had enclosed their ethereal spirits in bodies of an earthly mold, had He thereby made it impossible for them to live lives of holy obedience?

It is a matter of historic proof that this idea of the inseparable connection between matter and sin, like many an other delusion, found its way into the theology of the Christian Church, as one of the results of attempts, which but too often proved successful, to mix in the vain and puerile philosophies of heathenism with the eternal verities of the Word of God. And when Christian theologians allowed themselves to indulge in the dreamy speculations of Oriental and Greek philosophy, about the eternal conflict between the principles of light and darkness, it is not strange that they divested the account of the trial and fall of our first parents of all its grand and terrible significance, and turned it into a meaningless, if not contemptible, fable!

The earthly life of the Man Christ Jesus, however, ought for ever to have kept His people from supposing that life in the body and sin are necessarily associated with each other. That life of thirty-three years of sinless devotion to the will of the Father, is in itself the best possible evidence that the primary cause of the fall of man, and of the consequent degradation and misery of

our race, is not to be found in the fact that man is a physical and animal, as well as a spiritual, being.

But not this only. The forty days that followed upon the Savior's resurrection, during which time He gave His followers so many infallible proofs, that He was indeed that very God-Man Who, in the days of His humiliation, had so abundantly demonstrated His thoroughly human sympathy, as well as His divine power to succor them in the hour of need; His ascension to glory, coupled with the assurance of the angelic messengers, "This Jesus, Who was received up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye beheld Him going into heaven" (Acts I:11): these things ought likewise to have banished forever the supposition, that the reunion of soul and body in the resurrection state will be at all incompatible with the highest possible degree of felicity which, through the unending cycles of the eternal ages, the finite mind will be able to attain unto!

It is indeed true that ever since the fall the children of God have groaned in this sin-defiled tabernacle, and that many have longed with the apostle Paul "to depart and be with Christ" (Phil. I:23). Yet this apostle assures us, that that which he most ardently longed for was fellowship with Christ in suffering, and in "the power of His resurrection"

(Ch. III:10). And when "Paul the aged" wrote his last epistle to his son Timothy, and declared that the time of his departure was at hand, what were his expectations as to the immediate future? Did he expect to receive the crown of victory the very moment after he had been delivered from the cross of conflict and of suffering? However much it may accord with prevalent modern ideas about the heavenly state to respond affirmatively to the last question, nevertheless, bearing in mind his other inspired teachings, we hesitate not to affirm most emphatically, No! he expected nothing of the sort.

Why just look for a moment at the language of the apostle, as he sees the time approaching when he too will have to seal his testimony with his blood. And what does he say? "For I am already being offered, and the time of my departure is come. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course." The race was won! "I have kept the faith" (II. Tim. IV:6-7). And what now? Does he express his joyous assurance that the crown of righteousness is awaiting the deliverance of his spirit from the trammels of the flesh, and his exit from this earth? Not at all. That that crown will one day be his he now knows beyond the peradventure of a doubt, for he has faithfully per-

formed the task which his Master had put upon him.

But when does he expect that the Lord Jesus Christ, the righteous Judge, will give him this signal and most glorious proof of His approbation? "Henceforth there is laid up for me," kept in store, "the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give to me at that day." And to remove as it were all possibility of mistake, lest any one should suppose that by the phrase, "at that day," he refers to the day of his own death, he adds in immediate, and one might suppose in altogether unmistakable, connection, "and not to me only, but also to all them that have loved His appearing" (v. 8). It was to the resurrection of the just, to the day of the reunion of his spirit to his resurrected body, that he looked forward with eager and expectant eye, for the complete and glorious fulfillment of all his ardent expectations.

And is it not in accordance with the nature of things that it should be so? The spirit and the body of man have been likened, and with beautiful appropriateness, to a jewel and its setting. But who will say that the jewel is just as valuable without its setting as with it? Is not the value of the precious diamond enhanced? Is not its glittering splendor brought out into bolder relief, when

the skilful artisan has embedded it in a chastely-wrought setting of fine gold? And is it not somewhat thus with the ethereal spirit of man and its tenement of clay? The soul is indeed of first and greatest importance; nevertheless the soul, or spirit, is by no means the whole man. Man is a physical as well as a spiritual being. And is it reasonable to suppose that the spirit, while absent from the body, is, or ever will be, adequate to all the grand possibilities that the eternal future will unfold to the redeemed from among men? Is it not much more in accordance with sound reason, as well as with Scripture, to suppose that the saints cannot enjoy all that fulness of bliss and glory which is in store for them, until their spirits shall again have put on their early, yet spiritualized and glorified, garbs?

And is there not great reason to fear, my brethren, that the Church in these latter days does altogether too generally ignore the resurrection of the body? When, on that memorable day of Pentecost, the apostles began to fulfill their public ministry, did they preach Christ and death? Because "it is appointed unto men once to die" (Heb. IX: 27), did they make use of that fact as the foundation of all their arguments, to lead men to the immediate exercise of repentance toward God, and

of faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ? What are the facts in the case? When Peter stood up with the eleven he spoke to the multitude of the resurrection of our Lord, and of His coming again to execute judgment. Such too was most emphatically the twofold burden of his other notable discourse. And afterward, when the Sanhedrin had begun to utter its threatenings against the disciples, forbidding them "to speak at all," or to "teach in the name of Jesus" (Acts IV:18), it is recorded, as the result of a renewed outpouring of the Holy Spirit, that "they spake the word of God with boldness" (v. 31), the only particular subject of their preaching, which the pen of inspiration even stops to mention, being recorded in the emphatic statement, that "the apostles with great power gave" their testimony concerning "the resurrection of the Lord Jesus" (v. 33).

But not only at the beginning of the proclamation of the glad tidings of a now finished work of atoning mercy, was the doctrine of the bodily resurrection of the ascended Redeemer made prominent: everywhere throughout the book of the Acts, and in the apostolic writings, we are told that "Christ Jesus . . . died, yea rather . . . was raised from the dead" (Rom. VIII:34).

"This event," says Bernard, "is presented by

them, not simply as the seal of His teaching, or more generally (to use the poor and shrunken phrase of later times) as the proof of His divine mission: but as itself the cause and the commencement of that new world and eternal life, which was consciously 'the hope of Israel,' and unconsciously the hope of man."²

This statement is especially, though by no means singularly, true of the teachings of the great apostle to the Gentiles. Standing before the Jewish council "he cried out, Brethren, I am a Pharisee, a son of Pharisees: touching the hope and resurrection of the dead I am called in question" (Acts XXIII: 6). What else was the meaning of this utterance of that fearless and peerless champion of the truth of God, but that in so far as the sect of the Pharisees of his day, still continued orthodox in regard to those great doctrines of the resurrection of the body and the life everlasting, which underlie all the teachings of the ancient Hebrew Scriptures from Genesis to Malachi, he had never ceased to be a Pharisee? At Antioch, in Pisidia, he declared to his Hebrew brethren that God, in the raising up again of the Lord Jesus, had fulfilled "the promise made unto the fathers" (Acts XIII:32). And in his defense before king Agrippa he once more af-

² *Progress of Doctrine in the New Testament*, p. 137.

firmed the orthodoxy of his faith as to the Old Testament Scriptures, and referring to "the promise made of God unto our fathers" (Ch. XXVI: 6), he adds, "Unto which promise our twelve tribes, earnestly serving God night and day, hope to attain. And concerning this hope I am accused by the Jews, O king!" (v. 7). And then, appealing to the sober reason of his skeptical Roman judges, he asks, "Why is it judged incredible with you, if God doth raise the dead?" (v. 8). And further on he declares that in his preaching he had but reiterated the teachings of Moses and of the prophets, viz., "that the Christ must suffer, and . . . that He first by the resurrection of," i. e., from among "the dead, should proclaim light both to the people and to the Gentiles" (v. 23).

In the 15th chapter of 1st Corinthians this same apostle, in his great argument on the resurrection of the body, places the vital importance of this doctrine before us in these forcible terms: "For if the dead are not raised, neither hath Christ been raised: and if Christ hath not been raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins. Then they also that are fallen asleep in Christ have perished. If we have only hoped in Christ in this life, we are of all men most pitiable" (v's 16-19). And in the 8th chapter of Romans, by a bold figure of speech,

he represents the whole lower creation, both animate and inanimate, as groaning and travailing "in pain together until now, . . . waiting for the adoption" of the saints, "to wit, the redemption of our body" (v's 22-23). To which we need but add these words of "the disciple whom Jesus loved," in regard to the coming again in glory of our adorable Redeemer, "Beloved, now are we children of God, and it is not yet made manifest what we shall be. We know that, if He shall be manifested, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him even as He is" (I. John III:2).

Yes, dear brethren and sisters in Christ, the resurrection of the Son of Man is the sure pledge of the resurrection to immortal bliss and glory of all His believing people. And "if the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead" indeed "dwelleth in you," then be assured on the testimony of Him Who cannot lie, that having "raised up Christ Jesus from the dead," He "shall give life also to your mortal bodies" (Rom. VIII:11).

And when the bodies of the saints shall have been raised from the dust of the earth, and reunited to their immortal spirits, these glorified ones are by no means to be confined to the limits of this little globe; for they who shall have part "in the resurrection of the just" (Luke XIV:14), shall be "as

angels in heaven" (Matt. XXII:30), and with them shall roam over all the vast universe, and shall explore with glad surprise the wonderful works of God!

But chief among the joys of that heavenly state will be this,—He, Whom having not seen, they loved in their state of suffering and trial, the Man Christ Jesus, their elder Brother, will walk in their midst. And although even in glory the redeemed may be still unable fully to fathom the mystery of the Godhead, yet He Who first taught them by His Spirit to see the Father in Himself, will for ever remain—if we may thus speak—the link that shall bind them to the throne. And thus the God-Man, our adorable Redeemer, will be to all eternity the blissful channel whereby "the general assembly and Church of the firstborn" (Heb. XII:23), nay, all the ransomed sons and daughters of Adam, may draw near to the ineffable glory!

Impenitent friends, is there nothing for you in all this? Are there no attractions for you in the thought, that for you too it is possible to attain "unto the resurrection of life"? (John V:29). Would you not delight in the assurance, that you shall forever enjoy the society of the wise and the good of all ages? That angels and archangels, those glorious beings, the sons of God, the morning

stars of light, who, ere the dawn of this nether creation, basked in the sunlight of God's countenance, are to be your eternal, loved, and loving companions? And that you too are to be among that blessed number whom, in the ages to come, the Lord Jesus Christ will honor with His own society, and of whom He will say to the Father, They are Mine, "Behold, I and the children" whom Thou hast "given Me" (Heb. II:13)?

And remember likewise, impenitent friends, that there is also to be a "resurrection of judgment" (John V:29) unto eternal condemnation, and that even as the resurrected bodies of the redeemed will fit them for greater glory, and for more intense enjoyment, so it is no less certain that the resurrected bodies of the lost, will fit them for greater shame, and for more intense suffering.

O behold the open door, and count not yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, but enter while yet the Master calleth for you. For, lo, "The Spirit and the bride say, Come. And he that is athirst, let him come: he that will, let him take the water of life freely" (Rev. XXII:17).

Before closing suffer us, for a few moments, to advert to a strange misunderstanding, which is especially apt to prevail among the young. They are afraid, should they become Christians, that they

will be compelled at once and for ever, to forego all innocent hilarity, and that they must sternly repress all exuberance of their youthful spirits. And similar views have often been advanced by mature Christian people.

The speaker once had the somewhat startling question put to him by an excellent lady in his congregation, "Does the Bible say that the Savior ever laughed?" Suppose it does not, does that make it a sin for you or me to laugh? And has He not given His people the joyous assurance, "Blessed are ye that weep now, for ye shall laugh"? (Luke VI: 21). That was a conclusive, as well as "a very pretty reply," which was made by a little girl, to the statement that our Savior was never seen to smile, "Didn't He say, 'Suffer little children to come unto Me'? and they would not have come unless He had smiled."

But after all what is it that is to constitute human perfection in the eternal world? Will it not be the bringing into perfect exercise of all those powers of body, as well as of mind and heart, with which the all-wise Creator has endowed us? If so, then let us not be afraid to give freest scope to all the faculties of our wondrously composite being, whose well-nigh infinite capabilities, it may be, we scarce have begun as yet to dream of, in this in-

cient stage of our existence. And as to laughing, there are different ways of doing that as well as everything else. Says the wise Solomon, "As the crackling of thorns under a pot, so is the laughter of the fool" (Eccle. VII:6); aye, sometimes there is a very devil in its sarcastic, cutting tones. But the laughter of the grateful, happy child of God, hath oft a music in it, that is indeed "a good medicine" (Prov. XVII:22), and that breathes the very atmosphere of heaven into the despondent soul!

And who has a better right to be happy and full of joy, than he who has "peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ," and who can "rejoice in hope of the glory of God"? (Rom. V:1, 2). Ah,

"Shout! oh, shout! ye heirs of glory;
You on Jesus' throne shall rest!"

O think, fellow Christian, of our elder Brother as now in glory! O think how soon the day may dawn, when we shall "awake" in the likeness (Ps. XVII:15) of our glorified Redeemer, and when we shall behold the King in His beauty!

Well has one sung,

"O blessed, O thrice blessed word!
To be 'for ever with the Lord,'
In heavenly beauty, fair!"

Up! up! we long to hear the cry,
Up! up! our coming Lord draws nigh!
Yes! 'in the twinkling of an eye,'
To meet Him 'in the air'!"

Aye! in these same bodies, wondrously spiritualized and glorified, we shall yet see our blessed Master face to face, and in that day we shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and with all the saints and martyrs of our God, in the kingdom of His glory! And the Lord Jesus will be our eternal Companion, and He shall lead us beside the "restful waters,"³ and into the green pastures of His love!

"Jesus wept," and to His people this present evil world but too often proves "a vale of tears": but, blessed be Jehovah our God! the day is coming when He "shall wipe away every tear from their eyes"! (Rev. VII:17).

³ *A New Rendering of The Book of Psalms* by John De Witt, D.D., Ps., XXIII:2.

HOW GOD RECONCILED THE WORLD UNTO HIMSELF

HIS PLEA FOR RECONCILIATION

II Cor. V:18-21. *"But all things are of God, Who reconciled us to Himself through Christ, and gave unto us the ministry of reconciliation; to wit, that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself, not reckoning unto them their trespasses, and having committed unto us the word of reconciliation.*

"We are ambassadors therefore on behalf of Christ, as though God were entreating by us: we beseech you on behalf of Christ, be ye reconciled to God. Him Who knew no sin He made to be sin on our behalf; that we might become the righteousness of God in Him."

IF persons need to be reconciled to each other, if there is need of the establishment of peace and harmony between them, if friendship and love need to be restored; then the natural and inevitable conclusion is, that a state of things exists which is the very opposite of all this.

The text evidently implies such a state of things, where aversion and hatred prevail, rather than

friendship and love; and where there is discord and strife, rather than harmony and peace.

And the parties to this sad mutual dislike and aversion, and between whom a ceaseless, and, in this case, a most unequal contest is being waged, are the holy God and man the sinner, the almighty Ruler of heaven and earth, and a frail mortal, who is but as a worm of the dust before Him.

Ever since the fall of our first parents the whole race has been in this evil plight, and alas for us all, if reconciliation were wholly out of the question, for, as says the prophet, "Woe unto him that striveth with his Maker" (Is. XLV:9).

But, blessed be God! while our text clearly implies the existence of an unfriendly and warlike state of things, it does not simply imply, or give us reason to infer or conclude, but speaks to us in the clearest and most positive terms, of the fact that steps have actually been taken to bring about a reconciliation.

And which of the parties is seeking this reconciliation? Which of them first set himself to work to restore peace and harmony?

Did erring, sinful man first undertake this work? And is he now everywhere earnestly striving to make peace between God and himself? Did you ever hear of anything of that sort?

Ah, no! Not the creature, but the Creator first set about this stupendous work. And if He, the all-wise, the all-holy One, were this day, this hour, this moment to cease His efforts, not a single unconverted man, woman, or child would henceforth take even a single step, or make the slightest right endeavor, in that direction.

God does not foreordain any one to damnation. Alas! alas! fallen man ever and always consigns himself to eternal death, save as Divine grace interposes to save him from himself!

No! it is not man the sinner, but a holy and justly offended God, of Whose efforts at reconciliation the text speaks to us. As the Holy Spirit, speaking through the mouth of the apostle, here affirms, "All things" that are good and perfect, whatever concerns man's present well-being and his eternal salvation, they are all "of God."

Yes, and blessed be His holy name for ever! the text does assure us that God has Himself entered upon this great and stupendous undertaking; that He has actually undertaken, not the work of stamping out rebellion by crushing His enemies, for with a word He could hurl them every one to everlasting, remediless destruction; but rather, that He has imposed upon Himself the far more difficult

task, of changing rebels into loyal and devoted subjects, bitter enemies into loving friends.

The text sets forth:

First: The way in which God laid the foundation for this work:

Second: Reminds us of some most signal successes that had already crowned the completion of this wondrous scheme of

“Love Divine, all love excelling—”

and, Third: Directs our thoughts to the means whereby He has in ages past, and is still continuing to carry on, the mighty and self-imposed task.

“God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not reckoning unto them their trespasses.”

When? When the Son of God appeared in mortal flesh, and especially from the very hour that our blessed Redeemer publicly entered upon His great work.

No sooner has He received His priestly baptism at the hand of His forerunner, and been anointed by the Holy Spirit, but He is led forth into the wilderness, there to suffer the pangs of bodily hunger, and for forty days to be tempted of the Devil.

And ever after, while going about on His errands of love and mercy, and proclaiming salvation to the lost, He was destitute and afflicted. While

the foxes had holes, and the birds of heaven had their nests, He, the Son of Man, had not where to lay His head. Nay, He was persecuted and tormented by a world that He had come to save. Says the apostle, "For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that ye through His poverty might become rich" (II. Cor. VIII:9).

We remark, in the next place, that He had come to stand in the place of guilty man, and so Justice treated Him as though He were the sinner. "Him Who knew no sin He made to be sin on our behalf; that we might become the righteousness of God in Him." Says the prophet Isaiah, "He was despised, and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and, as one from whom men hide their face, He was despised; and we esteemed Him not. Surely He hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows; yet we did esteem Him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and Jehovah hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all" (Ch. LIII:3-6).

This is the only possible explanation, consistent with the Divine justice, not only of the agony of Gethsemane, of the cruel scourging by the Roman soldiery, and of the shameful death on the cross, but of the whole earthly life of the sinless Son of Man.

The sufferings and persecutions so often endured by the people of God, at the hands of the wicked, are no just comparison whatever. Though of such "the world was not worthy" (Heb. XI:38), yet they had themselves all sinned against God, and the worst that the world could do to them, is as nothing compared to what eternal Justice would mete out to them, had not Mercy found a Ransom.

But it is the sinless, the holy One, Who lives a life of poverty, Who is despised and rejected of men. He too it was Who took upon Himself the form of a Servant, and Who became obedient unto death, even unto the cruel and shameful death of the cross! *Why?* and where is the justice of all this? Our text gives the answer. "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself."

He is the Gift of the Father. "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish, but have eternal life. For God sent not His Son into the world to judge the world; but

that the world should be saved through Him" (John III:16-17).

For this very purpose was He sent, and came He into the world. "I lay down My life for the sheep. . . . Therefore doth the Father love Me, because I lay down My life, that I may take it again. No one taketh it away from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power," i. e., the right or authority, "to lay it down, and I have power," i. e., the right or authority, "to take it again." Our Lord here twice uses the very same word, which occurs in the Greek text of Matt. X:1, and where we read in our Revised English Versions, that "He called unto Him His twelve disciples, and gave them *authority* over unclean spirits." And it is with these remarkably significant words, that our Lord ends this declaration as to His absolute power and authority over His own earthly, human life: "This commandment received I from My Father" (John X:15, 17-18). And the Holy Spirit caused the very same evangelist, who wrote all this for the edification of the Church in after ages, to give to the world the proof and the demonstration that the Savior did have this power and authority, as we find in Ch. XVIII:4-9, where our Lord, by a mere word, first caused the band that had come to take Him to fall to the

ground, and then freely gave Himself into their hands. "Again therefore He asked them, Whom seek ye? And they said, Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus answered, I told you that I am He." And when Simon Peter had drawn his sword, "and struck the high priest's servant, and cut off his right ear," our Lord said to him, "Put up the sword into the sheath: the cup which the Father hath given Me, shall I not drink it?" (v's 10-11). From Matt. XXVI:53-54 we quote these additional words of our Lord to this impetuous disciple, "Or thinkest thou that I cannot beseech My Father, and He shall even now send Me more than twelve legions of angels? How then should the Scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it must be?" On the day of His resurrection He said to the two, with whom He walked on the way to Emmaus, "O foolish men, and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! Behooved it not the Christ to suffer these things, and to enter into His glory? And beginning from Moses and from all the prophets, He interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself." And that same evening He said to the little company, that were gathered in an upper room, "These are My words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must needs be fulfilled, which are

written in the law of Moses, and the prophets, and the psalms, concerning Me" (Luke XXIV:25-27, 44).

The common supposition that our Lord, in Gethsemane, prayed to be delivered from the death of the cross, we are fully persuaded, is entirely wrong. That is a thought which surely never entered the Savior's mind. It is not possible to enlarge on that matter in this connection, but it does seem utterly out of the question, in view of His oft repeated declarations, that He had come for that very purpose, that even amidst the unspeakable agony of the garden, He should have asked to be delivered from such a death, and surely He never would, even for a single moment, have felt any fear of physical death in any form whatever. But what would have been the appalling result, if, as the burden of a world's guilt rolled in upon His soul, life had given way in Gethsemane? *He would have lived in vain!* Such a death could never have atoned for human guilt!

The following Scriptures furnish proof absolute as to all that. "But when the fulness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, that He might redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons" (Gal. IV:4-5). "Knowing

that ye were redeemed, not with corruptible things, with silver or gold, from your vain manner of life handed down from your fathers; but with precious blood, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot, even the blood of Christ" (I. Pet. I:18-19). "Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us; for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree" (Gal. III:13). And so our Lord prayed that His life might be spared for the supreme agony of the cross; prayed, as we read in Heb. V:7, "with strong crying and tears *unto Him that was able to save Him from death.*" A prayer which the Holy Spirit assures us was "*heard.*"

It ought to be scarce needful to remark that our Lord was sent of the Father, and that He gladly came upon His errand of love and mercy, because there was no other possible way of escape for guilty man. "And He saw that there was no man, and wondered that there was no intercessor: therefore His own arm brought salvation unto Him; and His righteousness, it upheld Him" (Is. LIX:16). "In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, . . . and in none other is there salvation: for neither is there any other name under heaven, that is given among men, wherein we must be saved" (Acts IV:10, 12).

God's determination to vindicate His holy law, and to punish the transgressor; this is not only a tremendous truth for the persistent rebel; it is also full of comfort and joy to all holy intelligences, and to every pardoned sinner as well. Says another, "God hates sin as much as His awful threatenings say He does; and they who deny it deny the God of heaven. They deny His holiness, His real abhorrence of sin. They exhibit a false god to the human mind—a god without principle, a god without character. Such a God on the throne of the universe, and every angel would drop his harp, every 'demon' shout in ecstasy. The bands of God's moral dominion would be broken, the pillars of eternal justice would fall, and heaven fall with them; the fires of hell burst forth unchecked, and rebellion stand triumphant on the ruins. Such is not the God of heaven!"¹

And because sin might not, could not go unpunished, therefore the love and wisdom of God devised and carried out this wondrous scheme, whereby man might be redeemed, while Justice received her due.

In Gethsemane, before the Sanhedrin, at Pilate's court, and especially on Golgotha, "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself."

¹ Nathaniel W. Taylor, D.D.

In Gethsemane our Lord had, as it were, the dreadful foretaste of the wrath of God against a world that "lieth in the evil one" (I. John V:19). Into the awful mystery of that agony and bloody sweat we may not penetrate. But, dear hearer, if an evil heart of unbelief, or the world, or Satan, ever tempts you to cherish the fatal delusion that sin is a trifling matter, then go to dark Gethsemane, and look at the God-Man as He begins "to be sorrowful," "greatly amazed, and sore troubled" (Matt. XXVI:37; Mark XIV:33). Hear Him say to His three favored disciples, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death: abide ye here, and watch with Me" (Matt. XXVI:38). Aye, look at Him there, as He lies prostrate upon the cold ground, and list to that earnest, piercing cry which He sends up to heaven, "My Father! if it be possible, let this cup pass away from Me: nevertheless, not as I will, but as Thou wilt" (v. 39). Is that Life, upon Whose offering up on Golgotha's cross depends the salvation of untold millions of the human race, to come to an end with a mere ordinary death in the garden of Gethsemane? No! oh no! blessed be the God of our salvation, for see, there comes "an angel from heaven, strengthening Him" (Luke XXII:43). And now again He is "in an agony," and He prays yet "more earn-

estly." And now the sweat that oozes from that holy countenance, which has never been marked by the faintest trace of a single sin-defiled emotion of His pure soul; "His sweat" becomes "as it were great drops of blood falling down upon the ground" (v. 44).

But lo! the scene changes. The Son of Man rises from the mysterious conflict, joins Himself again to His bewildered and sorrow-stricken disciples, meets the traitor, Judas Iscariot, and the band that comes out against Him with swords and staves, as though He were a highway robber. Freely He delivers Himself up that night into the power of His deadly foes. And see how an unprincipled and infamous high priest, and his impious fellow judges, trample upon law and justice, in their mad haste to vilify and condemn the innocent object of their envy and malice!

Follow these men, whom Satan is leading on; follow them, as early in the morning they are hurrying their unresisting Captive through the streets of Jerusalem, and drag Him before Pilate's judgment-bar. Hear them clamoring for the judicial murder of Him "Who went about doing good" (Acts X:38). And see how they hurry hither and thither, and everywhere, among the rabble, like so many imps of darkness, goading them on in the

mad cry, "Away with Him! away with Him! Crucify Him! crucify Him!" O listen, if you can, as the cruel lash is laid again and again upon those bared shoulders. Look at that crown of thorns, which is being pressed upon that sacred head! And then see the mocked, beaten, bleeding Victim of their rage, sinking under the weight of His cross, as He is led forth to execution, as a lamb to the slaughter! Look! they are binding Him to the accursed tree, and the rude Roman soldiers are driving the nails through His quivering flesh! And do you hear those fiendish taunts of His enemies? But see how blackness gathers over all nature;

"How the sun in darkness hides,
And shuts his glories in,
While He, the mighty Maker, dies
For man, the creature's, sin!"

But hark! for there issues from the lips of the dying Sufferer a cry of untold agony and woe, "Eli! Eli! lama sabachthani! . . . My God! My God! why hast Thou forsaken Me?"

O! dear dying soul,

"Go to Golgotha, and tell
Why the scourge, the crown of thorns;
Why the powers of earth and hell
Join in deeds of hate and scorn;

Why such innocence in tears,
On the shameful cross appears.

Go to Golgotha, and learn
All the bitterness of sin;
In those scenes of wrath discern
What thine own desert hath been.
Thine the shame, reproach, and guilt;
'Twas for thee that blood was spilt."

Then and thus it was "that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not reckoning unto them their trespasses. . . . Him Who knew no sin He made to be sin on our behalf: that we might become the righteousness of God in Him."

The righteousness here spoken of is, first of all, a justifying righteousness. "There is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus" "For Christ is the end of the law unto righteousness to every one that believeth" (Rom. VIII:1; X:4).

"The moment a sinner believes,
And trusts in his crucified Lord,
His pardon at once he receives,
Redemption in full through His blood."

And this righteousness likewise assures us of everything else that is needful, to insure the believer's perfect sanctification, and his eternal blessedness and glorification.

The demands of the law having thus been fully met, and eternal Justice having received its due, being now fully satisfied, infinite Mercy would have her share, and so God comes to us, in the Gospel of His Son, assuring us that in Christ He is fully reconciled, and so now He pleads with us to be reconciled unto Him.

This is God's plea for reconciliation, not man's. "But all things are of God." And He comes to you, impenitent friends, with the evidence all about you of the efficacy of this wondrous plan of redeeming love. "Who reconciled us to Himself through Christ, and gave unto us the ministry of reconciliation; . . . and having committed unto us the word of reconciliation."

God does not send angels, but commissions redeemed sinners to proclaim the message of pardon and of peace. "An angel of the Lord spake unto Philip, saying, Arise, and go toward the south, unto the way that goeth down from Jerusalem unto Gaza: the same is desert. And he arose and went: and behold, a man of Ethiopia, a eunuch of great authority under Candace, queen of the Ethiopians, who was over all her treasure, who had come to Jerusalem to worship; and he was returning and sitting in his chariot, and was reading the prophet Isaiah. And the Spirit said unto Philip, Go, near,

and join thyself to this chariot" (Acts VIII:26-29). And so it was not the angel, but Philip who "preached Jesus" to the Ethiopian treasurer. And when that fiery persecutor, Saul of Tarsus, was arrested in his mad career, the Lord Jesus did not again appear to him at Damascus, as He had shown Himself to him on the way, but "there was a certain disciple at Damascus, named Ananias; and the Lord said unto him in a vision, . . . Arise, and go to the street which is called Straight, and inquire in the house of Judas for one named Saul, a man of Tarsus: for behold, he prayeth." And so it was Ananias who, "laying his hands on him, said, Brother Saul, the Lord, even Jesus, Who appeared unto thee in the way which thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mayest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Spirit" (Ch. IX:10-11, 17).

The grace that has saved such as these, and the multitudes who through the ages have come to Christ, ought to satisfy you. And, whoever you are, this grace of God is able to meet your case, can save you.

"We are ambassadors therefore on behalf of Christ, as though God were entreating by us: we beseech you on behalf of Christ; be ye reconciled to God."

O remember, Christless soul, as we have thus

endeavored to make plain to you the way of salvation, that it is not simply an erring fellow-mortal, but God Himself Who entreats you to be reconciled to Him.

He gave the Son of His love unto the shameful and cruel death of the cross, that you might be saved from the death eternal of soul and body in hell! And shall God plead with you in vain?

“Sinners! will ye scorn the message
Sent in mercy from above?
Every sentence, oh how tender!
Every line is full of love!
Listen to it—
Every line is full of love.”

Do not, we pray you, let Satan, or your own evil heart, delude you with the idea that you are to prepare yourself in order to be saved.

“The carnal mind” (A.V.), “The mind,” or minding, “of the flesh, is enmity against God” (Rom. VIII:7). Such are you. What now is to be done first of all? Why, enmity must cease. You must begin to love that Holy One Whom you have hated hitherto. How? Not by means of cold, heartless reasoning. No amount of reasoning has ever saved a soul from death. How then? By looking to the cross. By taking God at His word. “He that hath received His witness hath set his seal to this,

that God is true" (John III:33). "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself." "He that believeth on the Son *hath eternal life*" (John III:36), has it as an actual, present possession. "For this is the will of My Father, that every one that beholdeth the Son, and believeth on Him, should *have eternal life*; and I will raise him up at the last day" (Ch. VI:40). Take God at His word, and you are a saved soul; *saved now*, and saved eternally!

And now God beseeches, entreats you by us; and we pray you "on behalf of Christ," and in His stead, "be ye reconciled to God." And speaking to you as in the sight of God and of Christ, we put to each one of you the solemn question, Will you leave this house to-day as a friend, or as an enemy, of God and of Christ?

The Savior brings before our minds the appalling destiny of the poor, deluded "rich man," who, after a life of worldly ease, suddenly lifted up his eyes in the regions of the damned, "being in torments." To his plea for mercy, and for a little help, came back the words of Abraham, "Son, remember" (Luke XVI:19, 23, 25). And what if even one of you, beloved hearers, should, while out of Christ, and unreconciled to God, suddenly be summoned from the flitting scenes of time to the solemn, un-

changing realities of eternity? Ah! this very hour will rise up against you in judgment, and condemn you. And the remembrance of it will haunt you for ever! Oh! we beseech you, to-day, even now, "remember" the goodness, and mercy, and grace of God in Christ. Now take to heart the good, the blessed news of salvation, and "be ye reconciled to God."

He is waiting to receive you, and to bless you.

"Heaven comes down our souls to greet,
And glory crowns the mercy-seat."

Would you not like to be forgiven? to be reconciled to God? to have Him for your Friend? Remember that He does not need to be persuaded, or to be made willing, to pardon your sins, and to make you His son or daughter. In Christ He is reconciled, and has been reconciled since the very hour that the expiring Sufferer on the cross uttered the triumphant shout, "It is finished!" (John XIX:30).

And the mercy of our God is infinite, yea, He Himself beseeches and entreats you to accept a free, full, and everlasting pardon at His hands. As says the poet,

"Kind hearts are here; yet would the tenderest one
Have limits. God has none.

And man's forgiveness may be true and sweet,
But yet he stoops to give it. More complete
Is love that lays forgiveness at thy feet,
And pleads with thee to raise it. Only heaven
Means crowned, not vanquished, when it says
'Forgiven.'"²

The way is prepared. "Behold, all things are ready" (Matt. XXII:4). "For by one offering He hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified" (Heb. X:14). "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price. . . . Seek ye Jehovah while He may be found; call ye upon Him while He is near: let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto Jehovah, and He will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon. For My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways, saith Jehovah. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts" (Is. LV:1, 6-9).

O remember that it is God Who is "entreating by us" this hour, and once again "we beseech you on behalf of Christ," and in His stead, "be ye reconciled to God!"

² A. A. Procter in *Christian Lyrics*, page 358.

THE NEED OF PRESSING ONWARD IN THE DIVINE LIFE

Heb. VI:3. *"And this will we do, if God permit."*

IN the 5th chapter, at the 10th verse, the apostle says that our Lord was "named of God," i. e., called, addressed, entitled, "a High Priest after the order of Melchizedek." He then declares that he has "many things to say" in regard to that mysterious personage, but which are very difficult to explain, "seeing" that those to whom he wrote had "become dull of hearing."

Those Hebrew Christians had made no satisfactory progress in the divine life. The apostle plainly intimates that they had failed to make a proper use of the opportunities which they had enjoyed, and which ought to have made them thoroughly acquainted with the great doctrines of our holy religion, so as to have become skilful "teachers" of "the word of righteousness." Men and women whose spiritual discernment had become so keen, that they could readily distinguish between the good and the evil, the true and the false. Instead, how-

ever, of this proficiency in divine things, they were in the condition of those who, like helpless babes, needed to be fed on the simplest of spiritual diet, rather than with that more substantial food, which is fitted to nourish and strengthen the life of the mature Christian.

Nevertheless, he immediately proceeds to exhort them to bestir themselves, and no longer to be content with such mean attainments in the divine life.

"Therefore," he says, "leaving the principles of the doctrine," or, as more accurately translated in the Revised Version, "Wherefore leaving the doctrine of the first principles of Christ," the literal rendering being, the word of the beginning of Christ, i. e., the rudiments, or elementary principles, of Christian truth, "let us press on unto perfection."

He then specifies the doctrines which he calls the beginning of things for the believer in Christ. "Not laying again a foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God, of the teaching of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment." All these things being settled, their minds having been fully made up in regard to these fundamental doctrines of our holy religion, they were to "press on unto perfection;" they were henceforth to aim

at the "full growth" (Marg. R. V.) of the mature disciple.

From chapter V:11 to the end of the following chapter is, in fact, an interjected clause, or digression, in which the sacred writer, pausing in his profound argument concerning the Melchizedekian priesthood of Christ, seeks to arouse his fellow believers to give earnest heed to the momentous truths that he is endeavoring to unfold, by reminding them, on the one hand, of the appalling destiny of those who deliberately turn away from the light of heaven, and, on the other, both of their own loving toil for God and His saints, and of the exceeding greatness and the certainty of His promises to the faithful.

"And this will we do, if God permit."

The main question which we would propound here is this, Were those early Hebrew disciples, or rather, are we all of us, to whom the Holy Spirit speaks to-day, in these words of His revealed truth; is each one of us, my dear hearers, prepared to respond to the entreaty and exhortation of the text, so as to be able to say that we are in a proper state of mind and heart to "press on unto perfection"?

And let us note, first of all, that neither the text, nor yet the preceding context, furnishes the slightest warrant for treating with disdain all, or any

one of, the doctrines here referred to, or indeed any other doctrine taught in the Word of God. Hosts of shallow-brained would-be philosophers of our day are indeed ever ready to disparage the value of the doctrines of our holy religion. But in their mad haste to decry these doctrines, they show themselves either wilfully or stupidly ignorant of the fact, that a system of doctrines is simply truth formulated. They might as well tell us that a man can be a believer in Christ without believing anything, as to say that a Christian ought not to disturb himself about doctrines. If they had either themselves studied their mother-tongue long enough, to know that the word "doctrine" simply means something that is taught, or else did not presume quite so much upon the ignorance of others, they might perhaps stop insulting intelligent Christian people with their flippant nonsense about doctrines. What sane man would demand of the young astronomer, who is anxious to become proficient in his noble science, that he treat with contempt the doctrines enunciated by a Galileo, a Kepler, or a Newton, in regard to the physical universe? And yet when we seek to explore somewhat the fathomless mine of revealed truth, where we learn of God, the Creator of all things, and of His sovereign will; of man the creature, of his guilt, of the possibility

of his being saved, and of his eternal destiny of glory or despair: lo and behold, what a change! We are not to trouble ourselves about doctrines! Do such people really think that Christians are all idiots? or does their wicked rage against the truth of God lead them to make fools of themselves?

“Wherefore leaving the doctrine of the first principles of Christ, let us press on unto perfection.”

The writer addresses himself, not to those who openly despised, nor yet to such as foolishly ignored, any fundamental truth of revelation: but rather to such as were, or who ought to have been, rooted and grounded in those great doctrines, that lie at the very foundation of the temple of Christian truth. It was not for such as they to be “laying again a foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God,” and the like. Their minds ought to have been made up long ago in regard to these preliminary doctrines, so that they might now bend their energies to the contemplation of other truths, whose intelligent reception would enrich their minds, and fit them for greater usefulness.

As the apostle wrote to Timothy, some people are “ever learning, and” yet “never able to come to the knowledge of the truth” (II. Tim. III:7). And so they for ever remain “children, tossed to and

fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, in craftiness, after the wiles of error" (Eph. IV:14).

But, alas! how many such overgrown children there are in the Church to-day! How many, although they have had the Bible within their reach from very infancy, are yet wholly at sea in regard to its every doctrine! They for ever dwell in "doubting-castle," never excel, and are no comfort to themselves, nor helpful to others.

Contrariwise the Scripture bids each one to "be fully assured in his own mind" (Rom. XIV:5). And while it doubtless is a mischievous thing for a person to mistake falsehood for truth, error for sound doctrine: yet it's better by far to believe wrongly than not to believe at all. A persecuting Saul of Tarsus is preferable to a Gallio, who cares "for none of these things" (Acts XVIII:17). The first is ever the more hopeful case. And the great trouble, alas! with the mass of modern skeptics, and that which renders their case generally so hopeless, is their utter indifference to moral and religious truth. They are not unbelievers because they have carefully and honestly sought to investigate the claims of Christ upon them, for their loving faith and obedience, but because they have never earnestly heeded the Savior's voice, and don't care. And

so they are hard to reach, for, as Dean Swift has aptly said, "It is useless to attempt to argue a man out of a thing he was never reasoned into."

Let us, who are Christ's, beware lest we be found guilty of like folly.

We may attain to a well-defined, a self-assuring, and a settled conviction in regard to many of the doctrines of revealed truth. Even to "little children" the aged apostle John wrote, "Ye have an anointing from the Holy One, and ye know all things. I have not written unto you because ye know not the truth, but because ye know it, and because no lie is of the truth" (I. John II:18, 20, 21). The Spirit of God had taught these children every doctrine that was essential to their salvation. And is not that blessed Spirit of all grace, the third Person of the adorable Godhead, still as able and as willing to help both the old and the young, to a clear and definite understanding of the truth of God? And has not our Lord declared that he who is willing to do the will of God, and to cast himself upon His mercy in Christ, "shall know of the teaching," that "it is of God"? (John VII:17). Said the three-year-old daughter of a minister of the Gospel, to a gentleman who called to see her father, "No, papa is not in; but if it's about your soul, I can tell you all about that." And why

shouldn't that little child have been able to tell the man all he needed to know about the love of God in Christ? Many a learned theologian has been utterly in the dark as to all that, but did not our Lord say, in Matt. XI:25, "I thank Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that Thou didst hide these things from the wise and understanding, and didst reveal them unto babes"?

And this is the heaven-born privilege of each one of us, to "be fully assured in his own mind." The Bible was written for the common people; not for the exclusive benefit of speculative philosophers, or to become the special property of a tyrannical and avaricious priesthood. God meant that the common people should read, and study, and understand it for themselves. The Thessalonians were solemnly adjured to see to it, that a certain letter of the apostle Paul "be read unto all the brethren" (I. Thess. V:27), while the Colossian saints were commanded, when they should have read his epistle, to give the like opportunity to a neighboring church (Col. IV:16). And a crying shame it is, that in these days of Gospel liberty and cheap Bibles, so many so-called Protestants neglect and practically despise their glorious heritage, to secure which, both for themselves and for later generations, the men

and women of the Reformation struggled, suffered, bled, and died!

It is, moreover, our solemn duty to become "strong in the Lord, and in the strength of His might" (Eph. VI:10), in order that we may be "ready always," as the apostle Peter admonishes us, "to give answer," "with meekness and fear," "to every man that asketh you a reason concerning the hope that is in you" (I. Pet. III:15). Said that great German writer, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, "If I am to listen to the opinions of another, they must be positively enunciated. I have enough of the problematic within myself." Oh! my brethren, let impenitent men know that you believe something! They are often painfully anxious to know.

And how else can we "press on unto perfection"? How else can we ever attain to the "full growth" of men and women in Christ Jesus? To the Philipians Paul wrote that he had as yet by no means attained to perfection; but he added, "Only, whereunto we have attained, by that same rule let us walk" (Ch. III:16). And so he prayed for his Ephesian brethren, "That He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, that ye may be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inward man; that Christ may dwell in your hearts

through faith; to the end that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be strong to apprehend with all the saints, what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge, that ye may be filled unto all the fulness of God" (Eph. III:16-19).

It is a trite saying, and a good one too, "Be sure that you are right, and then go ahead." And let us be sure, my brethren, that we are not building our hopes for eternity upon the sand, but that our feet are planted upon the solid rock, and then, in the name of our God, let us press forward!

But why, we ask again, should the Christian be "established in" the "faith"? (Col. II:7). To recline at his ease, and to take his comfort for the rest of his days? A young lad one evening heard his father and some of the neighbors talking about certain members of the church, when some one mentioned Deacon So-and-so, a man who was of precious little use, either in the church or in the community at large. O well, they said, "He's established." The boy couldn't quite understand what they meant, but a few days later he was with his father on the road, with a one-horse team, and when they got to a muddy place the animal all at once stood stock-still, and simply wouldn't budge, when his father turned to him with the question:

"Why won't the horse draw?" and the boy thought he got some light on the subject:

"Well, I don't know, father; I guess he's established."

"For it is good that the heart be established by grace" (Heb. XIII:9). Yes! with "grace," grace to dispel the mists of doubt that becloud the soul's eternal prospects; grace to buckle on afresh the Christian armor, and to fight with redoubled energy "the good fight" of "the faith" (II. Tim. IV:7).

That's a grand word of the aged apostle Paul, "And, having done all, to stand" (Eph. VI:13). Ah! that is a glorious thing to do, "to withstand in the evil day, and" then, when the battle is over, and the victory won, still to stand, facing the foe! Martin Luther has not inaptly rendered the apostle's language, when he bids us accomplish all things well, and then hold the field.

Some very good people, who dream about having become perfectly holy, talk about a "rest in faith," as though the time had come, even while hosts of wicked spirits, and godless men and women, are still holding high carnival in the earth, for the Lord's people to show how well they like to see things go on as they are in this world, by just sitting still, and letting the Devil have his own way!

"Oh, no! we can't vote; our citizenship is in heaven." Better for us all to try and give the world a little taste of heaven before we get there!

We are to "rest" in Christ, indeed, for our personal salvation; not, however, to become loiterers in the King's highway of holiness, but in order that we may work with the more unremitting ardor, and the more successfully, for the promotion of His glory, for the salvation of a dying world. As some one has beautifully said,

"Quiet from God, it cometh not to still
The vast and high aspirings of the soul,
The deep emotions that the spirit fill,
And speed its purpose onward to the goal.
It dims not youth's bright eye,
Bends not joy's lofty brow;
No guileless ecstasy
Need in its presence bow.

It comes not in a sullen form to place
Life's greatest good in an inglorious rest,
Through a dull beaten track its way to trace,
And to lethargic slumber lull the breast.
Action may be its sphere,
Mountain paths, boundless fields,
O'er billows its career;
This is the strength it yields.

To sojourn in the world, and yet apart,
To dwell with God, and yet with man to feel,

To bear about for ever in the heart
The gladness that His Spirit doth reveal.

Not to deem evil gone
From every earthly scene,
To see the storm come on,
But feel His shield between.

It giveth not a power to human kind
To lay all suffering powerless at His feet,
But keeps within the temple of the mind
A golden altar and a mercy seat,

A spiritual ark,
Bearing the peace of God
Above the waters dark
And o'er the desert-sod." ¹

There is a passage in the 4th chapter of the Ephesian epistle which, as it has generally been rendered in most modern European translations of the Bible, has given altogether too much aid and comfort, to the spiritual indolence that still so lamentably prevails in many of our churches. And so the inspired Paul, whose own glowing zeal for the Master never abated, and whose soul could have no pleasure in those who shrank back in the hour of conflict and of danger, has been made to teach that our Lord Jesus Christ, when He "ascended far above all the heavens, that He might fill all things," at the first gave apostles and prophets, and

¹ *Christian Lyrics*, page 407.

then and now, "some evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers," in order that they, *and they only*, might labor "for the perfecting of the saints, . . . for the edifying of the body of Christ" (verses 10, 11, 12).

The German translators seem alone to have apprehended the meaning of the Spirit in this place; a meaning which is now made sufficiently plain in the Revised English New Testament, whence it appears that Christ gave both apostles and prophets, evangelists, and pastors and teachers, i. e., teaching pastors, in order that they might perfect "the saints *unto the work of ministering*," that thus, by the mutual and united labors of the ministry and the laity, "the body of Christ" may be built up, "till we all attain unto the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto" a perfect, "a fullgrown, man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ" (verse 13).

"And this will we do." O, my hearers! there are reasons the most solemn and awe-inspiring, why we should press on to higher and more profound conceptions of divine truth. "For as touching those who were once enlightened and tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Spirit, and tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the age to come, and then fell away, it

is impossible to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put Him to an open shame" (v's 4-6). Ah! it is dangerous to halt by the way. The ranks of the apostates are not filled up from among the earnest, working disciples, but from among the idlers and the stragglers in the Lord's army.

Be afraid for yourself, if you make no progress at all, and yet *are perfectly satisfied* with yourself. You need not be discouraged simply because you have made such slight attainments. The more your knowledge of divine truth increases, the more the grand doctrines of the Bible unfold themselves before your vision, the more you become conformed in heart and life to the matchless example of the Lord Jesus, the farther off the goal will seem to you. Such has ever been the universal experience of the wisest, the most eminent saints. The Rev. Dr. Isaac Watts could say, "I bless God, I can lie down with comfort to-night, not being anxious whether I awake in this world or another." And yet Dr. Watts also said, that there were three things that he expected would surprise him when he got to heaven; that he would miss many whom he had expected to see there; that many would be there whom he had not expected to find there; and

the greatest surprise of all would be to find himself there.

But, my dear hearer, beware of being satisfied to remain as you are. Over forty years ago we had the privilege of hearing that noble-minded Christian merchant prince, the late John V. Farwell, of Chicago, addressing the Presbyterian Synod of Wisconsin. A story had been going round in the religious press, of a certain thankful church member. He was reported to have got up in a class meeting one day, saying, "I bless God for the Methodist Episcopal Church. I have been a member of it for twenty-five years, and it has only cost me twenty-five cents!" Mr. Farwell asked a Methodist minister of his acquaintance, whom he met on the train on his way to Synod, if that story was true. "Yes," said the minister, "I was pastor of the church, and I turned to him and said, 'God Almighty have mercy on your stingy soul!' But to-day," he added, "he is one of the most liberal men in that church."

Ah! we have something more to do, my brethren, something higher to aim at, than simply to get to heaven! We ought to seek to lay up greater treasure for "the world to come" (Heb. II:5); that our joy may be the greater, our crown of righteousness the more radiant with glory!

Our blessed Redeemer has promised large rewards to those that serve Him faithfully. They that have been "faithful over a few things," He will "set over many things" (Matt. XXV:23). And to those, who have used the unrighteous mammon for His glory, and for the salvation of the perishing, He will ere-long entrust the true and eternal riches.

Said the angel to the prophet Daniel, "And they that are wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever" (Ch. XII:3). And even among these there will be degrees in bliss and glory, even as "one star differeth from another star in glory" (I. Cor. XV:41).

We may do damage, then, to our eternal heritage, even though the soul be not lost. Thus we read in I. Cor. III:15, "If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as through fire." And what of those professing Christians, who have never even undertaken to build anything upon the only true foundation, "which is Jesus Christ" (v. 11)?

Yet how few think of these things. "If I am only saved." Oh, that's a low view for a Christian to take! Even Moses chose "rather to share ill treatment with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; accounting the

reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt: for he looked unto the recompense of reward" (Heb. XI:25-26). If Moses could thus fix his eye on the promised reward; if "he endured as seeing Him Who is invisible" (v. 27); shall not each one of us emulate his noble example, and fix our eyes on that "crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give . . . to all them that have loved His appearing"? (II. Tim. IV:8).

"And this will we do, if God permit." The compound Greek particle, *ἐάνπερ*, here rendered by "if," occurs in only two other places in the New Testament, viz., in chapter III:6 and 14, of this same epistle; verses which deserve our most serious attention in the present connection. "But Christ as a Son, over His house; Whose house are we, *if* we hold fast our boldness and the glorying of our hope firm unto the end." "For we are become partakers of Christ, *if* we hold fast the beginning of our confidence firm unto the end." But, alas! even as there are said to be some animals who hibernate in summer, so there are not a few Christian people, who are zealous as Jehu for two or three months in the winter, and dead as a stone the rest of the year. Of what value is that sort of piety? And is a "revival" brought about by such people a blessing? Is it of

God? And what do men of the world think?

"And this will we do, if God permit." This then is the test of the reality and genuineness of our Christian experience hitherto, viz., that we "press on unto perfection." And the solemn thought is pressed home upon our minds and hearts, by the closing words of the text, that we can do nothing, cannot take a single step forward in the divine life, without help from on high. For all needed strength and opportunity we are wholly dependent upon the sovereign Disposer of all things. So then we are to "work out" our "own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God Who worketh in" us, "both to will and to work, for His good pleasure" (Phil. II:12-13). And knowing not how much, or rather, how little of time may still be allotted to any one of us, in this present evil world, let us be up and doing, adopting for ourselves the language of the poet:

"Onward! the goal thou seekest
Is worthy the quest of a life,
And love can give to the weakest
Courage and strength for the strife.

High is the prize above thee,
In the light of that golden sky;
The ladder's not all of sunshine,
Whereon thou must climb so high.

Earth's shadows and griefs have darkened,
Earth's sorrows have shaded its light,
But rays from the sunshine of heaven
Each upward step make bright.

Sometimes the glory paleth,
And its brightness disappears;
'Tis only thy eye that faileth,
Or is dimmed by earth-born tears.

Onward! our cry for ever,
Till our glorious goal be won,
Mid the brightness failing never
Of the light-enshrouded sun."²

²L. R. in *Christian Lyrics*, page 18.

SATAN'S GREAT MASTERPIECE

THE RISE AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE ANTICHRIST

II Thess. II:3-4, 8, 9-10. *"Let no man beguile you in any wise: for it will not be, except the falling away come first, and the man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition, he that opposeth and exalteth himself against all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he sitteth in the temple of God, setting himself forth as God. . . . And then shall be revealed the lawless one, . . . even he, whose coming is according to the working of Satan, with all power and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceit of unrighteousness for them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved."*

SATAN'S Great Masterpiece—who or what will it be? Before the final consummation dawns upon this sin-cursed earth, and the Lord Jesus

The above discourse was prepared, by request, for a local Monthly Pre-Millennial Bible Conference, and delivered at St. Paul's German Evangelical Church, Detroit, and published in *The Christian Workers' Magazine*,

Christ returns in His glory, and, as the Son of Man, the predestined King of kings and Lord of lords, inaugurates His benignant reign of perfect righteousness and everlasting peace over man in the flesh, and restores all things to a more than pristine beauty and loveliness; before all this *begins* to come to pass, what are we to look for? What will the archenemy of God and man, "the

organ of The Moody Bible Institute of Chicago, for August, 1915. It was composed before the beginning of the dreadful world war that is now raging. So many things have happened in these last few years, that, to bring it up to date, would make it altogether out of proportion with the other parts of the present volume. It is, therefore, given here exactly as published in said Magazine. The author begs leave simply to add a few words in this explanatory note. As the Scriptures plainly inform us, the battle of Armageddon is not on as yet. That can only take place after the Jews shall have come into peaceful possession of the land of Palestine, and after they shall have entered into a seven years' league, or covenant, with the Antichrist, whom they will have hailed as their Messiah. See John V:43; Dan. IX:27; Ezekiel XXXVIII and XXXIX; Joel III:1-2, 9-13; Zech. XIV:1-15. As for this consummate egotist and ruthless destroyer, Kaiser Wilhelm, of Germany, being the Antichrist: well, he is bad enough; but when Satan comes to fairly outdo himself, he will produce a monster in human form, that, intellectually as well as in every other way, will far surpass this fiend of Potsdam.

great dragon . . . the old serpent, he that is called the Devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world" (Rev. XII:9); what will he yet undertake to do, as a last desperate attempt to thwart the merciful designs of the Triune Jehovah for the redemption of a lost race?

From the very day that Satan, as the old serpent, succeeded in beguiling Eve in his craftiness (II. Cor. XI:3), he has been "going to and fro in the earth, and . . . walking up and down in it" (Job I:7), seeking what he can do to hinder the work of God, and to ruin the souls of men.

When the Son of God was manifested in mortal flesh, and had come to give His life for our salvation, how Satan roused "the principalities, . . . the powers, . . . the world-rulers of this darkness" (Eph. VI:12), in order to frustrate the Divine purposes of love and mercy, while he himself, as "the prince of the world" (John XIV:30), was for ever dogging the footsteps of the lowly Nazarene, until, in that woeful "hour," when the Son of Man was given over to "the power of darkness" (Luke XXII:53), he at last succeeded in nailing Him to the accursed tree.

But brief was Satan's triumph, for our blessed Lord broke asunder the bars of death, "because it was not possible that He should be holden of

it" (Acts II:24). The enemy of all good, however, soon recovered from the chagrin of his dismal failure, and so he himself, and all "the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places" (Eph. VI:12), started in at once to persecute the Lord's followers. As the Savior had foretold, the enemy likewise soon began to sow tares among the wheat, so that ere long the Church began to swarm with teachers of error and delusion, while, in process of time, hypocritical and fraudulent pretence of every sort, almost wholly obscured "the faith which was once for all delivered unto the saints" (Jude 3).

FALSE CHRISTS AND FALSE PROPHETS

Having found "nothing in" the Christ (John XIV:30), whereby he might hinder the full accomplishment of the Divine purpose, Satan soon began to produce "false Christs, and false prophets" (Matt. XXIV:24), and even antichrists. To the elders of Ephesus, whom the apostle Paul had summoned to meet him at Miletus, he declared, "I know that after my departure grievous wolves shall enter in among you, not sparing the flock; and from among your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them" (Acts XX:29). And toward the close of

the century, "the disciple whom Jesus loved" (John XXI:20) gave utterance to this pregnant prophecy, "Little children, it is the last hour: and as ye heard that antichrist cometh, even now have there arisen many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last hour" (I. John II:18).

In a little more than five centuries after the venerable apostle wrote these words the Papacy had become fully established, and the bishop of Rome, as the pretended and boastful successor of the apostle Peter, had begun to assume the most horrible and blasphemous titles, "not opposing, but asserting an equality with God, . . . being not offended to be styled by his parasites, '*Our Lord God the Pope, Another God on earth, King of Kings and Lord of Lords, Our most holy Lord, the victorious God and man in his See of Rome, God the best and greatest, Vice-God, the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world, the Most Holy who carrieth the Most Holy.*'" *Duffield on the Prophecies*, page 282. *The Prophetic Conference*, Allegheny, Penn., Dec., 1895, page 21.

In view of such awful assumptions, which papal Rome has never been slow to enforce by cruel imprisonment, by inhuman tortures, and by its diabolical autos da fe, it is little wonder that able scholars, both premillenarians and postmillenarians,

have long held that here we assuredly have the little horn of Daniel's prophecy, who should "speak words against the Most High" (Dan. VII:25), and likewise the scarlet woman, "THE MOTHER OF THE HARLOTS AND OF THE ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH," whom the aged revelator "saw . . . drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus" (Rev. XVII:5-6).

To quote Prof. W. G. Moorehead: "The marks of correspondence between the prediction and the Papacy are extraordinary, almost conclusive. In its marvelous origin and history; in its near relation to the old Roman Empire as its heir and successor—for, as Wylie says, 'the Papacy is the ghost of Peter crowned with the shadowy diadem of the old Cæsars'; in its wide departure from the truth; in its idolatry, persecuting spirit, daring assumptions, and blasphemous pretensions, the Papacy, it must be confessed, strikingly resembles the Man of Sin. No one can compare the two without feeling the force of Richard Baxter's quaint remark, 'If the Pope be not Antichrist, he has bad luck to be so like him.' "

IS THE PAPACY ANTICHRIST?

Devout students of prophecy have, however, more and more come to the same conclusion as Dr.

Moorehead, viz., that, "wonderful as the parallelism is, and traceable to almost any length, nevertheless the Papacy does not fill up nor complete the titanic portrait of the final adversary which the prophetic word furnishes us. Rather this system belongs to the apostasy which precedes and issues in the revelation of Antichrist, and is identified with Babylon of the Apocalypse. That a revival of its influence and power is now going on, Germany, Britain, and the United States attest. And this is in exact accord with the predictions about its last days. The final view which the Spirit of prophecy gives us of Babylon the harlot, the apostate church, presents her as throned upon the Seven Hills; as seated on the Beast, controlling and using the world-power for the accomplishment of her own purposes (Rev. XVII). But she is not alone. Babylon is a mother, Babylon has daughters. Who would venture to deny that there are signs of a falling away from the truth of God in Protestantism itself?"

To all of which it is, alas! altogether safe to add that multitudes of so-called Protestants do not claim to know anything whatever about personal conversion or spiritual regeneration, or are ever earnestly concerned about doing the will of God. Indeed, "All his thoughts are, There is no God" (Ps. X:4).

Well may we expect that something even far

worse than Popery, with all its frightful abominations, yet awaits a godless world and a dead church. And Rome and all her daughters, for that is what Protestant churches are, just in so far as they are like her in their dead formalism, and in their practical denial of the Lord Who bought them; they are together to become the prey of "the Son of perdition," of "The beast that . . . is about to come up out of the abyss" (Rev. XVII:8). In other words, Satan is yet going to fairly outdo himself!

And now let us prayerfully inquire whether indeed Holy Scripture warrants and demands such a belief, as to the Devil's last and supreme attempt to overthrow the work of God, and to defy high Heaven. Is that enemy of all righteousness, "the deceiver of the whole world," when, after he and his angels have been thrust out of heaven, and when he has come down to this earth "having great wrath, knowing that he hath but a short time" (Rev. XII:12); is he yet going to produce a great masterpiece, that will verily be his *chef-d'œuvre*, by which, at one swoop, he will bring, not simply the whole of merely nominal Christendom, but all the inhabited earth, to the feet of a pseudo-Christ, mocking high Heaven, and deluding an apostate race, by producing a blasphemous counterfeit of Him, Who shall then speedily come to cast the archfiend "into

the abyss" (Rev. XX:3), "and to bring in everlasting righteousness" (Dan. IX-24)? Momentous question! What Scriptural ground is there for all that?

A TERRIBLE ONE TO ARISE

A terrible One is to arise, the like of whom the world has never seen as yet. Let us briefly refer to the way in which Holy Writ speaks of him. "Thou shalt take up this parable against the king of Babylon, and say, How hath the oppressor ceased! the golden city ceased! . . . How art thou fallen from heaven, O day-star, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, that didst lay low the nations! And thou saidst in thy heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; and I will sit upon the mount of congregation, in the remotest parts of the north; I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High. Yet thou shalt be brought down to Sheol, to the uttermost parts of the pit" (Is. XIV:4, 12-15).

This language cannot possibly be ascribed to Babylon's famous ancient king, for read Daniel IV:37, and bear in mind that this is his last recorded utterance, "Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise and extol and honor the King of heaven; for all His

works are truth, and His ways justice; and those that walk in pride He is able to abase." Far less can we apply this language of Isaiah's prophecy to his grandson Belshazzar, with whose drunken feast the Chaldean monarchy was suddenly brought to an inglorious end. Daniel VII:7-8 speaks of "a fourth beast, terrible and powerful, and strong exceedingly; and it had great iron teeth; it devoured and brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with its feet: and it was diverse from all the beasts that were before it, and it had ten horns. I considered the horns, and, behold, there came up among them another horn, a little one, before which three of the first horns were plucked up by the roots; and, behold, in this horn were eyes like the eyes of a man, and a mouth speaking great things." Daniel VIII:9 speaks of "a little horn" which came forth out of one of "four notable horns" (v. 8), that had come up instead of "the he-goat," i.e., Alexander the Great of Macedonia, and this "little horn . . . waxed exceeding great, toward the south, and toward the east, and toward the glorious land." Verses 23-25 tell us of this same little horn, as "a king of fierce countenance, and understanding dark sentences," who "shall stand up. And his power shall be mighty, but not by his own power; and he shall destroy wonderfully, and shall prosper and do

his pleasure; and he shall destroy the mighty ones and the holy people. And through his policy he shall cause craft to prosper in his hand; and he shall magnify himself in his heart, and in their security shall he destroy many; he shall also stand up against the prince of princes; but he shall be broken without hand." Chapter IX:26 mentions "the prince that shall come." In chapter XI:21 we read of "a contemptible person," who "shall obtain the kingdom by flatteries." And this is what is said of his bold career in verse 36, "And the king shall do according to his will; and he shall exalt himself, and magnify himself above every god, and shall speak marvelous things against the God of gods; and he shall prosper till the indignation be accomplished; for that which is determined shall be done." In our text he appears as "the Man of sin, the Son of perdition, the Lawless One." In I. John II:18 as the "Antichrist." And in Rev. XIII:1 as "a beast coming up out of the sea, having ten horns and seven heads, and on his horns ten diadems, and upon his heads names of blasphemy."

One thing ought to be quite evident. This terrible one, represented to us in these different ways, surely does not stand for a long line of popes, or any other succession of oppressors; nor for any system of error, be it Roman Catholicism, Mohammed-

anism, or any other false system of doctrine. Some one individual is manifestly pointed out, who, when he appears, will indeed do wonderful exploits. But no such a frightful character, as here portrayed, appeared before, or at the time of our Lord's first advent, nor has he ever yet appeared.

Antiochus Epiphanes, 176 to 164 B.C., with his overweening pride and appalling blasphemy, did frightful things. That monster of history, the Emperor Nero, gave the world no slight intimation of what the Antichrist will bring to pass one of these days. That scourge of Europe, Napoleon Bonaparte, went a long way toward realizing the woeful picture: but Heaven's hour for letting loose the powers of evil had not yet struck, and so the haughty ruler of France had to meet his Waterloo, and finally ended his days on the lonely rock of St. Helena.

WHO IS THE MAN OF SIN?

Who then is to be the Man of Sin, whose mighty deeds shall yet astound the world, so that "the whole earth" shall wonder "after the beast" (Rev. XIII: 3)?

Without in any wise presuming to settle that question, let us call your attention to one man's observations on the subject. We refer to Joseph

Birkbeck Burroughs, M.D., of Oberlin, Ohio, and his interesting volume, entitled, *Titan, Son of Saturn; The Coming World Emperor*.

His conclusions may be summed up in few words. Rev. XVII:9-11 reads, "Here is the mind that hath wisdom. The seven heads are seven mountains, on which the woman sitteth: and they are seven kings; the five are fallen, the one is, the other is not yet come; and when he cometh, he must continue a little while. And the beast that was, and is not, is himself also an eighth, and is of the seven; and he goeth into perdition." Dr. Burroughs reminds us that "Before the Christian era there had been five great persecuting kings. These five heads and their kingdoms had all fallen.

"Pharaoh, the great head of Egypt.

"Sennacherib, the great head of Assyria.

"Nebuchadnezzar, the great head of Babylon.

"Ahasuerus, the great head of Medeo-Persia.

"Antiochus, the great head of Greek-Syria.

"The one who persecuted in John's day was Nero, emperor of Rome. This makes six." Our author does not inquire as to who was the seventh, who came after John's day. But "After the seventh there is to come an eighth, and this eighth crowned persecutor is still in the future."

"This eight Devil-inspired ruler," he reminds us,

"is not to be a new man on the world's stage. John tells us that he is not to be an individual distinct and separate from the group of seven kings. He is to be one of the seven, honored above the others by being permitted to reign a second time over the nations.

" 'He is the eighth, and is of the seven, and goeth into perdition.' John not only has told that this eighth king will be one of the first seven re-crowned, but he also throws out the sixth and the seventh king as possible candidates for this future honor. He tells us that the eighth king will be one of the first five who are dead. 'The beast that thou sawest, was (alive), and is not (alive); and is about to come up out of the abyss' (v. 8). (Codex Sinaiticus, *kai palin parestai*, shall again be here.)

" 'And the beast that was, and is not, is himself also an eighth, and is of the seven.'

"Thus," according to Dr. Burroughs, "this eighth world monarch, John points out, is one of the first five who will be restored to life. He who is coming a second time is either Pharaoh, Sennacherib, Nebuchadnezzar, Ahasuerus, or Antiochus."

And Daniel, in chapter VIII:9, 23, 25, already quoted, saw, as he maintains, "that the great Antichrist would, in a restored life, be Ba-sil-e-os Antiochus The-os E-piph-an-es, which, being interpreted,

reads: The King—appearing—holds out against—God.”

WILL BABYLON BE REBUILT?

But we must hasten to briefly consider another matter. The coming Antichrist, whoever he may prove to be; where will he establish his royal throne? From what great city will he issue those fearful mandates that will appall the nations? We verily believe that “Babylon, the glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldeans’ pride” (Is. XIII:19), will be rebuilt by him, and that he will make her, as the restored capital of the nations, far more glorious than of old, until the end come, when it “shall be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah.”

At an international prophetic conference, held December 10-15, 1901, in the Clarendon Street Baptist Church, Boston, Massachusetts, the Rev. Sholto D. C. Douglas, of Scotland, delivered an address on “The Antichrist; His Character and History,” from which we quote the whole of this remarkable paragraph: “It would appear,” says Mr. Douglas, “that Babylon mystical, of Revelation XVII, differs from Babylon literal (without the word ‘mystical’). The characteristic of the destruction of this Babylon is its suddenness, as mentioned four times in Rev. XVIII:8, 9, 17, 19. I would ask you to

read the whole of this chapter." And here comes the really remarkable sentence, "*A being so great will not live in a borrowed capital, such as Babylon mystical, or Rome, but in one which he will build for himself.* Now, where great cities have been, they may be again, if the conditions which led to their existence be restored. Only then let the country be irrigated as before, and its marvelous fertility will be restored. The line for the much-talked-of railway of the Euphrates Valley has already been surveyed, and no one living in the present day of great and rapid changes, would be bold enough to say that such a means of communication cannot and will not be constructed. Thus the great city will have even greater facilities . . . than its predecessor."

Thus declared this Scotch brother in the year of grace 1901. And what now are the present day facts? The Bagdad railway has not only been surveyed, but the Porte has granted a concession for 99 years, and also a guaranty, and it is hastening to its completion. The first section, the Konieh-Eregh-Burgurlu line, extending eastward from Konieh (the ancient Iconium, 310 miles east of Smyrna, on the Ægean Sea (Acts XIV), was opened in 1904. The total length of the line will be 1,550 miles, extending from the Mediterranean Sea to

the Tigris River and will run through Aintab and Berejik to Mosul, thence along the right bank of the Tigris to Bagdad, i.e., within 60 miles of Babylon!

Mr. William T. Ellis, Editor *Afield of The Continent*, of Chicago, speaking of the route of this German Bagdad railway, says, "This newest international highway runs over the world's oldest and most beaten paths. It stretches from the Hellespont to the Persian Gulf. Its tracks already down, or projected on surveyors' charts, overlies the footprints of the apostle Paul, of Cyrus, Darius, Alexander the Great, Constantine, Nebuchadnezzar, Sennacherib, Harun-al-Rashid, Saladin, Richard the Lion-Hearted, Mahmud the Conqueror, and—well, a ticket over the new Bagdad railway is equivalent to a course in ancient history."

And here fits in the marvelous story of the irrigation of ancient Mesopotamia. For ages the waters of the Euphrates and the Tigris have run to waste in the desert, or have accumulated in unwholesome marshes, and the devastation and decay of centuries have set their mark upon enormous areas, that in ancient times, when well watered, were extraordinarily fertile. After lying dormant for ages, like Palestine itself, as the result of devastating wars, Tartar inroads, and Turkish apathy, fertility is

about to be restored to these desolate regions as by the wave of a magician's wand. In 1909 an English engineer, Sir William Willcocks, was commissioned by the Turkish government to prepare an irrigation scheme. His plan entailed an expenditure of \$75,000,000. A part of this gigantic scheme has already been completed. In December, 1913, the Hindiye barrages of the river Euphrates was inaugurated, and practical effect is thus being given to this vast scheme of irrigation in Mesopotamia, which, when completed, will entirely restore fertility to a sterile country, and instead of about one and a half million of people getting a precarious and inadequate livelihood, there will soon be, according to Sir Willcocks, comfortable subsistence for a population of eleven or twelve millions.

PROPRIETY OF CAUTION

Two or three cautionary remarks are in place right here. Let us beware, on the one hand, of being wise above what is written, and of making the serious mistake of treating our surmises, however plausible, as though they were already assured facts. On the other hand, let us not fail to give most serious consideration to what may prove to be one of the most startling developments in the unfoldings of

Providence. Babylon may rise again before our very eyes, and may speedily attain to more than its pristine glory!

Thus everything seems to be getting ready for the appearance of "The Son of Perdition." One of these days war will be proclaimed in heaven. Satan and his armies will be for ever thrust out from those blessed regions, and will be "cast down to the earth" (Rev. XII:9). And the Devil is coming down "having great wrath, knowing that he hath but a short time" (v. 12).

All that will then be needed will be for God to withdraw Him "Who restraineth now" (II. Thess. II:7), and Satan's Great Masterpiece will soon appear, and then, alas! "Woe for the earth and for the sea," and for those who dwell in them!

One word more and we must close. Two revelations and two personal appearances are clearly foretold in the Book of God. "The Man of Sin, The Son of Perdition, The Lawless One," will first be revealed; will personally appear to vent the rage of Satan, "the god of this age" (II. Cor. IV:4 and margin), "against the God of gods" (Dan. XI:36), and against all who are His true worshipers; and then also "shall appear the sign of The Son of Man in heaven" (Matt. XXIV:30), Who "shall slay" him "with the breath of His mouth, and bring"

him "to nought by the manifestation of His coming," of His parousia, His personal presence (II. Thess. II:8).

May the God of all grace help us all so to live, that ere these mighty events "begin to come to pass," we may all be "caught up to meet the Lord in the air; and so shall we ever be with the Lord." Amen, and Amen!

CHRISTIAN LIGHTS IN THE WORLD, AND HOW THEY ARE TO HOLD FORTH THE WORD OF LIFE

Phil. II:15-16. *"Among whom ye are seen as lights in the world, holding forth the word of life."*

THE terms light and darkness are frequently used in Scripture as symbolic of good and evil, of righteousness and iniquity.

This world is full of evil, of folly, of wickedness, and of crime—darkness broods over the minds and hearts of men, as once it did over primeval chaos. And fallen man loves to have it so. Said our Lord to Nicodemus, "And this is the judgment, that the light is come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the light; for their works were evil" (John III:19).

But God is absolutely holy; perfect in all the attributes of His matchless being, that is, to use the figurative language of Holy Writ, "God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all" (I. John I:5).

Now these two, light and darkness, as we all know to be true in nature, cannot abide each other.

Hence the Holy Spirit admonishes us, II. Cor. VI: 14-15, "Be not unequally yoked with unbelievers: for what fellowship have righteousness and iniquity- or what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what portion hath a believer with an unbeliever?"

"Let there be light" (Gen. I:3), in the Hebrew, "Light be!" said the voice omnipotent, "and there was light. . . . And God divided the light from the darkness" (v. 4), and thus began the work of fitting up this globe, as an abode for a new race of intelligent beings. And in allusion to this act of the great Creator a holy apostle declares, II. Cor. IV:6, "Seeing it is God, that said, Light shall shine out of darkness, Who shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." And our Lord had, at the very beginning of his notable career, commissioned him to go to the people of Israel and to the Gentiles, "to open their eyes, that they may turn from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God" (Acts XXVI:18). "Ye are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hid" (Matt. V:14). It is thus that the Savior characterizes His disciples. These, and many like Scriptures, all positively declare, or assume, that our fallen race is groping about in moral

and spiritual darkness; or, in other words, that the children of God, as we read in the context, are living "in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, *among whom*," says our text, "*ye are seen as lights in the world, holding forth the word of life.*"

"As lights," that is, as luminaries or illuminators; or again, as openings for the light to shine through, as doors or windows.

And so the Lord's people are to demonstrate to the world that "lieth in the evil one" (I. John V:19), the fact that they are "children of God," by the blamelessness, the unselfishness, and the wholly unblemished character of their lives from day to day.

Has God lit up your soul with the light of heaven? O, then, let it shine forth!

The moon has no light of its own, but it is a faithful reflector of the light of the sun. And in winter, when we see so little of the king of day, she shines much longer than in summer, and performs her queenly task with all the more unwearying faithfulness for the belated traveler.

Now the Lord Jesus Christ is declared to be "The Sun of Righteousness" (Mal. IV:2), and never before, in the history of our race, was He, the Son of God, so long a time absent from this dark world.

Some one has written an interesting work, entitled, *The Ten Theophanies*,¹ viz., the ten times when our Lord, during previous dispensations of the grace of God, manifested Himself to the children of men. Let us, in passing, briefly refer to the more memorable of those occasions, when He, the Son of God, appeared in the likeness of man, to make known and to execute the will and purpose of Heaven.

He was "the Voice of Jehovah God, walking in the garden in the cool of the day"; Who proclaimed the protevangelium in Eden, saying to the serpent, who, "in his craftiness" (II. Cor. XI:3), had beguiled Eve, the mother of us all, "And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed: He shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise His heel" (Gen. III:8, 15).

He was "the Judge of all the earth" (Gen. XVIII:25) with Whom the patriarch Abraham plead in behalf of the guilty cities of the plain.

When Jacob fled to escape from his enraged brother Esau, we are told that "he lighted upon a certain place, and tarried there all night, . . . and lay down in that place to sleep. And he dreamed; and, behold, a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven; and, behold, the angels

¹ Rev. William M. Baker, D.D.

of God ascending and descending on it. And, behold, Jehovah stood above it, and said, I am Jehovah, the God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac" (Gen. XXVIII:11-13).

To Moses, "in the land of Midian," He "appeared" as "the Angel of Jehovah . . . in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush. . . . Moreover He said, I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. . . . I AM THAT I AM" (Ex. II:5; III:2, 6, 14).

To Joshua He appeared "as Prince of the host of Jehovah" (Joshua V:14).

And when Babylon's haughty monarch had caused Daniel's three friends, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, to be "cast into the midst of the burning fiery furnace. . . . Then Nebuchadnezzar the king was astonished, and rose up in haste: he spake and said unto his counsellors, Did not we cast three men bound into the midst of the fire? They answered and said unto the king, True, O king. He answered and said, Lo, I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire, and they have no hurt; and the aspect of the fourth is like a son of the gods. Then Nebuchadnezzar came near to the mouth of the burning fiery furnace: he spake and said, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, ye serv-

ants of the Most High God, come forth, and come hither. Then Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego came forth out of the midst of the fire" (Dan. III: 21, 24-26).

Thus, and in other ways, did the Son of God of old manifest Himself unto the children of men, until at length, "when the fulness of the time came" (Gal. IV:4), "the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us" (John I:14). But now, what never happened before in the history of our race, He has been absent from our earth for nearly quite nineteen centuries, and a godless world fondly imagines, because of His long-continued absence, that He is never again going to come back. Say they, "Where is the promise of His coming? for, from the day that the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation" (II. Pet. III:4).

Dear hearer, are you like the moon in winter, all the more faithful in reflecting His light and glory, while He still delayeth His coming?

Suppose that during some dark time in winter, when day after day, and week after week, the sun is wholly hid from view, the clouds should regularly clear away at night, and that then, not only once, nor simply the moon; but that night after night the moon and all the planets should hang like black balls

in the heavens. Would we not have reason to fear that something far worse than an eclipse had happened? that the sun failed any longer to supply the needed light? and that our whole solar system was being enveloped in perpetual darkness?

Now this is precisely the way the world reasons about Christ, when Christians fail to give forth light. Just so long as the moon and the planets give forth their light by night, we know that the sun is behind the clouds by day. Just so does an unbelieving world instinctively feel about the absent Christ, when His people let their light shine. It was so with the Jewish rulers. "Now when they beheld the boldness of Peter and John, and had perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marvelled; and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus" (Acts IV:13). And even now men are often forced to say, "*This is not of earth.*"

But that isn't all by any means. Sun, moon, and stars pour forth their light, not for their own glorification; but to show forth the praises of their Creator.

"The heavens declare the glory of God;
And the firmament (the expanse) showeth His
handiwork.

Day unto day uttereth speech,
And night unto night showeth knowledge."
(Ps. XIX:1-2.)

Said our blessed Lord, "I seek not Mine own glory" (John VIII:50). "I have glorified Thee on the earth" (Ch. XVII:1). And shall not the disciple do as did his elder Brother and Lord? When the nations of old forgot God, Who made them, they turned and worshipped the host of heaven; the creatures rather than the Creator, Who is blessed for evermore! Let us not give ourselves over to a like, aye, to a worse idolatry.

Not for the purpose of self-adulation, or for the glorification of the Church: but to the glory of the Triune Jehovah are we to let our light shine. "Even so let your light shine before men" is the Master's command, "that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father Who is in heaven" (Matt. V:16). As England's great dramatist has said:

"Heaven doth with us, as we with torches do,
Not light them for ourselves; for if our virtues
Did not go forth of us, 'twere all alike
As if we had them not."²

"Holding forth the word of life." Without the light of the sun, how all nature would pale, and

² Shakespeare's *Measure for Measure*, Act. I, scene 1.

sicken, and die! Everywhere light and life are almost inseparably connected with each other. What a difference, for example, between plants in a dark, damp cellar, and those in the open air and sunlight.

"In Him was life; and the life was the light of men" (John I:4). How now may every disciple of Christ hold "forth the word of life"? Not necessarily by trying to play the orator. Were that so then, alas! many a modest and timid soul would find it utterly impossible to obey our Lord's injunction. And then, too, many a humble-minded, faithful Sabbath-school teacher might as well at once step aside. And what a sudden collapse would befall many a prayer-meeting, which is a perennial source of blessing, if bereft of the moral and spiritual force of those, whose voices are never raised in public, to speak a word of exhortation, or even to lead in prayer.

Every right-minded minister of the Gospel is ready to say with Moses, when told that Eldad and Medad prophesied in the camp, and when he was urged to forbid them, "Art thou jealous for my sake? would that all Jehovah's people were prophets, that Jehovah would put His Spirit upon them" (Num. XI:29). But God has not so ordered. And it is well, for the sake of the great body of the Lord's people, that there are plenty of ways

in which they can "hold forth the word of life," without attempting the impossible.

Happily for us all, the humble, devoted child of God may, in a thousand ways, let his or her light shine into the moral and spiritual darkness of this world, though knowing next to nothing of the graces of rhetoric, and though slow of speech. As some one has aptly said, "Christians are to be living Bibles." "Ye are our epistle," we read in II. Cor. III:2-3, "written in our hearts, known and read of all men, being made manifest that ye are an epistle of Christ, ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in tables that are hearts' of flesh."

This it was that strengthened the apostle's confidence. And no minister of the Gospel need fear that his labors will be in vain in the Lord, or that souls will not be converted to God under his preaching, when his church is made up of such "living Bibles," even though nine-tenths of the communicants were deaf-mutes!

And among such a people it will never be difficult to find, or to train up, those whose natural talents, as well as spiritual graces, will fit them to speak the suitable word of exhortation in the prayer-meeting, to aid in the religious instruction of the young,

and to help in every Christian work; for God bestows all needed mental and spiritual gifts upon His Church, when she is in a condition to make a good use of these great blessings. It was not to a few isolated individuals, but to the church at Philippi as a whole, that the apostle Paul, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, addressed these precious and all-comprehending words of promise, "And my God shall supply every need of yours according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus" (Ch. IV:19).

There was no lack of workers in apostolic times. And there were among these very many noble-minded Christian women like Priscilla, the wife of Aquila, with whom Paul engaged in tentmaking when he first came to Corinth. They afterward sailed with him for Syria. "And they came to Ephesus, and he left them there. . . . Now a certain Jew named Apollos, an Alexandrian by race, an eloquent man, came to Ephesus; and he was mighty in the Scriptures. This man had been instructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in spirit, he spake and taught accurately the things concerning Jesus, knowing only the baptism of John: and he began to speak boldly in the synagogue. But when Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they took him unto them, and expounded unto him the way of God more accurately" (Acts XVIII:19, 24-26). It

was in the home of these humble tentmakers that this eloquent man learned to become a most efficient preacher of the Gospel. Six times this godly couple are mentioned in the Acts and in Paul's epistles, always together, and three times the wife's name precedes that of her husband. Then Paul says, Rom. XVI:1, "I commend unto you Phœbe our sister, who is a servant of the church that is at Cenchreæ." It is with her that he is supposed to have sent this letter to the saints at Rome. In the same chapter, at verse 12, he says, "Salute Tryphæna and Tryphosa, who labor in the Lord." These godly women, and a host of others, were all earnestly engaged in the work of the Lord. In this last respect the Church of our own day has but just begun fairly to imitate the example of the early Church. And yet the Church of God, when at all alive to her solemn responsibilities and wonderful privileges, has never altogether lacked earnest laborers among the laity; men and women who have been the faithful and zealous helpers of the ministry of reconciliation.

But, as already intimated, the text does not simply, nor even specially, address itself to these. It speaks to all the true children of God; to all such it is a word of comfort and of exhortation.

Sun, moon, and stars; these have no audible

“speech nor language.” They do not address the outward ear. Yet, without all this, “their voice is . . . heard” (Ps. XIX:3). They “speak in reason’s ear,” and tell us of the power and the wisdom, and the ever-watchful providence of Him Who sitteth on the throne of universal empire.

Suppose, fellow-Christian, that you cannot do what the world calls a great thing. Let not that discourage you, as though, therefore, you could be of no use whatever in the Master’s vineyard. Aye, beware lest you deceive yourself with the utterly false idea, that that will excuse you if you do nothing at all.

Well may we address every professed follower of Christ in the language of a familiar hymn:

“Hark! the voice of Jesus crying,—
‘Who will go and work to-day?
Fields are white and harvest waiting;
Who will bear the sheaves away?’
Loud and strong the Master calleth,
Rich reward He offers thee;
Who will answer, gladly saying,
‘Here am I; send me, send me!’

If you cannot cross the ocean,
And the heathen lands explore,
You can find the heathen nearer,
You can help them at your door.

If you cannot give your thousands,
You can give the widow's mite;
And the least you do for Jesus,
Will be precious in His sight.

If you cannot speak like angels,
If you cannot preach like Paul,
You can tell the love of Jesus,
You can say He died for all.
If you cannot rouse the wicked
With the judgment's dread alarms,
You can lead the little children
To the Savior's waiting arms.

If you cannot be the watchman,
Standing high on Zion's wall,
Pointing out the path to heaven,
Offering life and peace to all;
With your prayers and with your bounties
You can do what Heaven demands;
You can be like faithful Aaron,
Holding up the prophet's hands.

If among the older people,
You may not be apt to teach;
'Feed My lambs,' said Christ, our Shepherd,
'Place the food within their reach.'
And it may be that the children
You have led with trembling hand,
Will be found among your jewels,
When you reach the better land.

Let none hear you idly saying,
 'There is nothing I can do,'
While the souls of men are dying,
 And the Master calls for you.
Take the task He gives you gladly,
 Let His work your pleasure be;
Answer quickly when He calleth,
 'Here am I; send me, send me!' " ³

"Among whom ye are seen as lights in the world, holding forth the word of life." Aye, do what you can, and do all you can, by direct personal effort, by giving of your time, your talents, your means, for the cause of Christ, and for the salvation of the perishing: but remember, we beseech you, that in no other way can you so successfully hold "forth the word of life," as by holy living!

Dear Christian hearers, the world judges the Gospel that is preached, aye, our blessed Lord Himself, by the daily lives of His professed disciples. We read in Rom. II:24, "For the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you." And as corrupt Jewish conduct stood in the way of Paul's preaching, so now. How often do we hear it said, "That man had better keep still, people have no confidence in him." Or, "If somebody else had said the same thing, they would have felt very differently." Ah, yes! there is indeed a remarkable

³ Rev. Daniel March.

difference in the effect which one man or another produces, even though they use almost the very same words. Why is it so? How can the riddle be solved? Well, that's easily done. It is the real or supposed character that stands back of the words, that endues them with power, or causes them to fall upon listless ears!

Would you be really helpful, dear hearer, to the cause of Christ, and in saving souls? Then we say to you, first of all, Live the Gospel! And again we say, Live it! Let your life from day to day, in the family, in the social circle, in your worldly affairs, yea, everywhere, be radiant with the light of heaven. And thus you will, even in your silence, point men heavenward! "A proud Indian nabob, going along the streets one day, was attracted by the sounds proceeding from a missionary school, and he drew near to listen. The boys were reading the fifth chapter of Matthew. The eyes of the prince flashed with unwonted fire; and when they had finished their lesson, he exclaimed, 'Well, if you only live that chapter as well as you read it, I will never say another word against Christianity!'" What a striking comment on the apostolic exhortation, I. Pet. II:12, "Having your behavior seemly among the Gentiles: that, wherein they speak against you as evil-doers, they may by your good works, which

they behold, glorify God in the day of visitation." Some one has well said, "Unless a man lives as high as he shouts, the less noise he makes the better." Ah! the world has noise enough; loud-mouthed professions and all that: but it is perishing for lack of light!

How often it is said of this or that community, that the people have been preached to death. Preached to death! Not at all. No community has ever been "preached to death," where the word heard has been reduced to practice, by the men and the women who received it as being in very deed the word of the living God. No! but moral and spiritual stagnation and death have often been caused by the sad fact, that many who say, "Lord, Lord," have simply been hearers, and not doers, of the word.

"The keeper of the lighthouse of Calais, France, was once boasting to a traveler of the brilliancy of his lantern, which can be seen ten leagues, that is, thirty miles, at sea, when the visitor said to him, 'What if one of the lights should chance to go out?' 'Never; impossible!' he cried, with a sort of consternation at the bare hypothesis. 'Sir,' said he, pointing to the ocean, 'yonder, where nothing can be seen, there are ships going by to all parts of the world. If to-night one of my burners were out, within six months would come a letter—perhaps from India,

perhaps from America, perhaps from some place I never heard of—saying, that on such a night, at such an hour, the light of Calais burned dim, the watchman neglected his post, and vessels were in danger. Ah, sir, sometimes in the dark nights in stormy weather I look out to sea, and I feel as if the eye of the whole world were looking at my light. Go out? Burn dim? Oh, never!” Well has the narrator added, “Was the keeper of this lighthouse so vigilant; did he feel so deeply the importance of his work and its responsibility; and shall Christians neglect *their* light, and suffer it to grow dim—grow dim when, for need of its bright shining, some poor soul, struggling amid the waves of temptation, may be dashed upon the rocks of destruction? No! ‘Hold forth the word of life.’ This is the way to save souls. ‘Holding forth the word of life,’ says the apostle. Why? ‘That I may have whereof to glory in the day of Christ, that I did not run in vain, neither labored in vain.’”

“ ‘For sadder sight the eye can know
Than proud bark lost, or seaman’s woe—
The shipwreck of the soul! ’ ”

Let us then never forget, fellow-Christians, what that noble man of God of half a century ago, Philip Paul Bliss, has so beautifully sung:

“Brightly beams our Father’s mercy
From His lighthouse evermore;
But to us He gives the keeping
Of the lights along the shore.

Dark the night of sin has settled,
Loud the angry billows roar;
Eager eyes are watching, longing,
For the lights along the shore.

Trim your feeble lamp, my brother:
Some poor sailor tempest-tost,
Trying now to make the harbor,
In the darkness *may be lost!*

Let the lower lights be burning!
Send a gleam across the wave!
Some poor fainting, struggling seaman,
You may rescue, you may save!”

WAS THERE ONLY ONE ASCENSION? ¹

WAS there only one ascension? And with well nigh united voice modern commentators respond, *Certainly, only one.* Well, if that be so, then where did the risen Christ go every time that He so mysteriously vanished from the sight of His followers? Where did He spend the greater part of His time, during those forty days that intervened between His resurrection and the hour when, in the full light of open day, He ascended in triumph from the mount of Olives? And where did He stay during those forty nights? Not under the hospitable roof of the dear friends in Bethany, who would so gladly have sheltered that sacred form from the chilly blast, as they had so often done aforetime, when He had been wont to retire thither after the weariness and vexation, and the heart-aches, occasioned by the hardness of heart of scribe and Pharisee. And surely not, as erstwhile, in the days of His humiliation, did He spend His nights pleading

¹ This address was prepared for and read to The Presbyterian Ministers' Association of Detroit and Vicinity, January 28, 1918.

with His heavenly Father for strength, to fulfill the task that He had given Him to accomplish, when

“Cold mountains and the mid-night air
Witnessed the fervor of” His “prayer.”

As it was manifestly not in the Divine purpose that the Risen One should continuously abide, as before, with man in the flesh, since He was no longer of this world, the question still presses for an answer, Where and with whom did He abide, when absent from the sight and presence of His disciples? Was there no region close at hand, to which He might at any time withdraw? And were there no suitable companions, to whose congenial society He might betake Himself? who would rejoice to flock around Him, to serve Him, and to adore Him with unmingled feelings of joy and ecstasy?

When the son of Tolmai was first brought to Him He had declared, “Verily, verily, I say unto you, Ye shall see the heaven opened, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man” (John I:51). All that is yet to be, but the question certainly seems pertinent, Why may not the resurrected Son of Man have done then, what His angelic messengers will do by and by? That “multitude of the heavenly host” who, in the vale of Bethlehem, raised their hallelujah at the time of

His human birth, "saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among men in whom He is well pleased" (Luke II:14); that multitudinous throng was never far away while He abode among men; nor even now are they far removed from our earth, since they are "all ministering spirits, sent forth to do service for the sake of them that shall inherit salvation" (Heb. I:14). And we are assured by the Master Himself, that the little ones that believe upon Him do all have their guardian angels, who, "in heaven . . . do always behold the face of" His "Father Who is in heaven" (Matt. XVIII:11). Five times in the epistle to the Ephesians does the Holy Spirit speak to us of the heavenly places, or regions, and that in such a way as indicating, and in some cases positively asserting, that they are thronged by angelic potencies of various degrees of rank and power. And it is as plainly implied, asserted indeed, that the resurrected and glorified saints are likewise to become inhabitants of those blissful regions. Nay more, it is even declared that in spirit they are already as good as there. "But God, being rich in mercy, . . . raised us up with Him," i. e., "with Christ," "and made us to sit with Him in the heavenly places, in Christ Jesus" (Eph. II:4, 6). And in full accord with all this is the declaration of our Lord, that "they that are

accounted worthy to attain to that world, and the resurrection from" among "the dead," will be "equal unto the angels" (Luke XX:35-36).

But it is high time that we turn to the few passages of Scripture, which are the crucial texts in the present discussion. Chiefly, of course, our attention needs to be concentrated upon the interview of our Lord with her "from whom seven demons had gone out" (Luke VIII:2), and to whom, as Mark informs us, "He appeared first" (Ch. XVI:9).

In regard to the great masters of literature the college student has been told to "verify his references." Well, that advice is certainly infinitely more in place in regard to the writings of men who spoke as they were moved, as their minds were borne along, by the Spirit of the living God. And is it not a lamentable fact, that the ministry of the present day, seems to a great extent supremely satisfied with itself, even though untold numbers never make the slightest effort to ascertain for themselves what is the mind of the Spirit? And in regard to the matter in hand, when it becomes a simple duty to expose, what we believe to be the utterly erroneous interpretations that have been put upon this, and upon certain related passages—especially too when one cannot but remember that these at times

strangely absurd, and even grotesque interpretations, have been foisted upon these Scriptures by men often of the rarest excellence, whose learning and devout spirit make one glad to sit at their feet—it is well to bear in mind what the Rev. Edward Riches de Levante says, in his Prolegomenon to that work of rare excellence, his *Biblia Hexaglotta*, anent the Greek text of the New Testament, “In these days of earnest study, bold criticism, and wild speculation, it behooves a man to look, pause, reflect, and not to leap before he is tolerably sure of his ground; not to jump at the conclusions of others, however great and learned, before he himself, however humble and unlearned, has reflected and examined the position.”

Let us now turn to John XX:11-13. “But Mary was standing without at the tomb weeping: so, as she wept, she stooped and looked into the tomb; and she beholdeth two angels in white sitting, one at the head, and one at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain. And they say unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? She saith unto them, Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid Him.”

Finely does the Rev. Henry Blunt, of the Anglican Church, remark as to this interview between Mary Magdalene and the angels, “What a remark-

able evidence of the intensity of Mary's grief is afforded by the fact, that even a vision of angels does not interrupt it! She is so completely absorbed by this one feeling, that there is no surprise, no symptom of astonishment; she answers the angelic speaker as if she had conversed with angels all her life." ²

"When she had thus said, she turned herself back, and beholdeth Jesus standing, and knew not that it was Jesus. Jesus saith unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? whom seekest thou? She, supposing Him to be the gardener, saith unto Him, Sir, if thou hast taken Him away, tell we where thou hast laid Him, and I will take Him away. Jesus saith unto her, Mary. She turneth herself, and saith unto Him in Hebrew, Rabboni; which is to say, Teacher. Jesus saith unto her, Touch Me not: for I am not yet ascended unto the Father: but go unto My brethren, and say to them, I ascend unto My Father and your Father, and My God and your God. Mary Magdalene cometh and telleth the disciples, I have seen the Lord; and that He had said these things unto her" (v's 14-18).

Alas! that so much and such amazing ingenuity should have been expended, not in elucidating and clarifying for the beclouded minds of the children

² *Lectures on the Life of Christ*, p. 358.

of men, this beautifully simple and charming account of so sublime and touching an interview, between the Conqueror of death and Hades, "the Living One," Who could thenceforth say of Himself, "I was dead, and behold, I am alive for evermore" (Rev. I:18), and this marvelous trophy of His victorious grace. And that too when a rational explanation lies close at hand; an explanation, moreover, which at once removes from it all seeming mysticism, and brings the whole scene before us in all its native grandeur and loveliness. But, as has so often happened, man is not prepared to accept the Word of God with the simplicity of a little child. He must needs philosophise, and search out some fanciful and hidden meaning, quite foreign to the plain, obvious import of the language, something recondite and out of the way; and scarce anywhere else is all this more signally exemplified than in regard to the passage before us.

The excellent Bishop Ellicott, in his truly learned "Hulsean Lectures for the Year 1859," presents this extraordinary medley on the subject, "Amazement, hope, belief, conviction, all, in their fullest measure, burst, as it were, upon her soul. With the one word *Rabboni*, and, as the context leads us to think, with some gesture of overwhelming and bewildered joy, she turns round, as if to satisfy her-

self, not only by the eye and ear, but by the touch of the clasping hand, that it was indeed He Himself, no mere heaven-sent form, but her Teacher and Deliverer, Whose feet she had been permitted to follow over the hills of Galilee, Whose power had rescued her, Whose redeeming blood she had seen falling on the very ground nigh to which she was then standing. Yes, her outstretched hand shall assure her that it is her Lord!"

Oh! good bishop do leave her alone with her Lord! But no, not content to do that he goes right on, "But it must not be; relations are now solemnly changed. That holy body is the resurrection body of the ascending Lord; the eager touch of a merely earthly love is now more than ever unbecoming and unmeet. With mysterious words, full of holy dignity and majesty, yet at the same time of most tenderly implied consolation, the Lord bids her refrain. The time indeed will come when, under higher relations, love eager and demonstrative as that now shown to the risen, may hereafter unforbiddingly direct itself to the ascended Lord. But that time is not now. Still love devoted and true as that displayed by Mary of Magdala shall not be left unblessed. To her is vouchsafed the privilege of being the first mortal preacher of the risen Lord. From her lips is it that even apostles are to learn,

not only that the resurrection is past, but that the ascension is begun, and that He, Who is not ashamed to call them brethren, is now ascending to His Father and to their Father, and to His God and their God." And yet he adds, with almost the very next breath, and that without a blush, or the least indication of surprise, or even a word of explanation, "Very shortly, perhaps, after Mary Magdalene had left the apostles, the other ministering women, who had brought the first tidings to the apostles, are permitted to meet their Lord face to face, yes, and to clasp the holy feet, before which they had at once fallen in trembling and believing adoration. They saw, they believed, they touched, and they worshiped." In speaking of "the exact feeling which led to their embracing the Lord's feet," he rightly concludes that it proceeded "from a reverential love that evinced itself in supplicating adoration."

And it may well be asked, Was it because Mary's love for the Master, though its manifestation would be all right just as soon as He was safe in heaven, was so ardent, that she alone of all His followers must not be allowed to touch Him? Pitifully self-contradictory reasoning! And one might almost indignantly inquire, if that was the reward for those years of faithful ministering to the daily wants of

Him, Who had declared that even the giving of a cup of cold water in His name, and out of love for Him, should "in no wise lose" its "reward" (Matt. X:42)? But by what authority does any one presume to say that the love of this noble, self-denying, consecrated, holy woman,—upon whose pure and spotless character none but the basest and most groundless aspersions have ever been cast,—that her love was of such a sort, so much more mixed with a base earthly alloy, than that of any other follower of the Savior, that she alone must not be allowed to touch even the hem of His garment?³

³ In *The Christian Worker's Magazine* for August, 1917, there appeared an excellent article by the Rev. Dr. J. Glentworth Butler, copied from *The Herald and Presbyter*, of Cincinnati, showing that the painters of the Middle Ages are responsible for the attempt to try and identify Mary Magdalene with the "woman who was . . . a sinner" (Luke VII:37), who anointed the Savior's feet at the house of Simon the Pharisee. As Dr. Butler clearly shows, the assumption is absolutely without foundation. To persist, as so many do to this day, to call these places of refuge for fallen women, Magdalen hospitals, is a palpable outrage against one of the purest characters mentioned in Holy Writ!

But, as it seems to us, another most remarkable fact should be stated in this connection; a fact which serves to show how our gracious God, Who loves unsullied womanhood, has always sought to shield her from the assaults of Satan, and from man's tyranny and scurrilous

Evidently Bishop Ellicott, like a host of other writers, quite fails to understand the rationale of this remarkable interview, for he continues, "Though the use of the present anabaino *may* be regarded as *ethical*, i. e., as indicating what was soon and certainly to take place, it seems much more simple to regard it as *temporal*,—as indicating a process which had in fact already begun. The extreme view of this text," he adds, "as indicating that an ascension of our Lord took place on the same day that He rose (. . .), is, it is needless to say, plainly to be rejected, as inconsistent with Acts I:3, and numerous other passages in all the four Gospels." Perhaps, however, some Scripture evidence may be adduced before this paper is concluded, showing that the good Bishop had little occasion to dismiss that idea so summarily.

abuse, namely this:—The three sinful women whom our blessed Lord rescued from a life of shame, *are every one left nameless!* The evangelists were kept from mentioning the name of any one of them. See Luke VII; John IV; John VIII. Among the redeemed, in "the general assembly and church of the firstborn, who are enrolled in heaven, . . . the spirits of just men made perfect" (Heb. XII:23), they have doubtless long since had "a new name" (Rev. II:17): but the Spirit of God did not design that their earthly names should be bandied about by the vile and infamous!

It will not be out of place, before taking leave of our noble friend, to quote what he feels forced to admit anent the belated Festival of the Ascension, viz., to quote his exact language, "how comparatively little the ascension of our Lord is dwelt upon by the early writers, compared with their references to the resurrection. And it may also be observed," he adds, "that the special festival, though undoubtedly of great antiquity, . . . and certainly regarded in the fourth century as one of the great festivals, . . . is still not alluded to by any of the earliest writers, Justin Martyr, Irenæus, Clement of Alexandria, and Cyprian, and is not included in the list of festivals enumerated by Origin. . . . The preaching of the apostles was pre-eminently the resurrection of Christ (Acts III:3, IV:33 et al.), as that which included in it everything besides; it was from this that the early Church derived all its fullest grounds of assurance."⁴

It would have been well if the Church had always followed that apostolic and primitive example! But, alas! even so-called Protestantism has, in our day, largely gone festival-mad; and, as a legitimate and inevitable result,—as has always been the case in Roman Catholic countries,—the Heaven-appointed weekly day of rest is fast becoming a mere holiday,

⁴*Historical Lectures*, p. 338, note 1.

and thus is human tradition once again making "void the word of God" (Matt. XV:6).

But we must pass on. And so let us briefly note certain other strange constructions that have been put upon this remarkable interview.

Says that great German commentator, Johann Peter Lange, "We can infer from that which follows that she meantime has fallen at His feet and embraced them, like those women in Matt. XXVIII:9, and the woman that was a sinner, Luke VII:39." To this his American translator, the late Prof. Philip Schaff, adds, that in explaining our Lord's admonition that she must not touch Him, we must have reference to His summons to Thomas in verse 27, and to the disciples in Luke XXIV:39. "It is therefore," he says, "not the act of touching as such, which the Lord reproves, but the animus or motive of Mary" (page 610).

According to many others it meant that "Jesus demanded a greater reverence for His body, now that it had become divine."—Chrysostom, Erasmus, et al.

One writer (Amnon) says, "Jesus desired to spare her the touching of one Levitically unclean." Another (Paulus) "His wounds still pained Him, therefore touching Him would have hurt Him." And yet others, "Because the new, glorious cor-

poreality of Jesus was still so tender as to shun every vigorous grasp" (Schleiermacher, Olshausen). Says Weisse, "He was still bodiless, a mere spiritual apparition, a ghost." Hilgenfelt, "He as yet appeared only as a mere man, being not yet reunited to the Logos, and therefore adoration was unseasonable." But, as has been well said, "afterwards He allowed Himself to be called by Thomas, 'My Lord and my God.' "

The illustrious John Calvin says that our Lord's "state of resurrection would not be full and complete, until He should sit down in heaven at the right hand of the Father; and, therefore, that the women did wrong in satisfying themselves with nothing more than the half of His resurrection, and desiring to enjoy His presence in the world." Says Meyer, "Handle Me not for the purpose of examining whether it be really Myself in the body, or My glorified spirit." "Hold Me not as though we were in the perfection of the existence of that world beyond us, for I am not yet ascended, etc., to say nothing of thyself" (Lange, Hofmann, Luthardt, Tholuck, et al.).

"Tarry not with Me, but make haste and discharge the message; time enough later for handling, greeting, holding" (Beza, Calovius, Bengel). "Seek not thy comfort in My present appearance by ter-

restrial contact, but by spiritual communion" (Aretius, Grotius, Neander, and others).

Says the learned Dean Alford, "She believed she had now gotten Him again, never to be parted from Him. This gesture He reproved as unsuited to the time, and the nature of His present appearance. 'Do not thus—for I am not yet restored fully to you in body—I have yet to ascend to the Father.' This implies in the background *another and truer touching* when He should have ascended to the Father." Wordsworth would have us read, "'Cleave not to Me in My bodily appearance; do not touch Me carnally, but learn to touch Me spiritually.' When the power of the bodily touch ends, then the spiritual touch begins, and that touch most honors Christ and profits us." Hengstenberg conjectures that Mary, in the mistaken notion that the partition wall between Christ and her had now fallen, desired to *embrace* Him: this the Lord withstood, because the process of glorification was not yet completed, and the separation still continued in part." Says that eminent Swiss writer, Frederick L. Godet, "To touch in order to enjoy, *to attach one's self* to some one; this is not the moment to attach yourself to Me, as I am before you in My human individuality."

Dean Farrar tells us that Mary, having "appar-

ently tried to clasp His feet, or the hem of His garment, . . . cried . . . 'Rabboni!' . . . and then remained speechless with her transport." And then the learned man proceeds, "'Cling not to Me,' He exclaimed, 'for not yet have I ascended to the Father; but go,' etc. Awe-struck, she hastened to obey. She repeated to them that solemn message—and through all future ages has thrilled that first utterance, which made on the minds of those who heard it so indelible an impression—I have seen the Lord."

"Nor was her testimony unsupported. Jesus met the other women also, and said to them, 'All hail!' Terror mingled with their emotion, as they clasped His feet. 'Fear not,' He said to them; 'go, bid My brethren that they depart into Galilee, and there shall they see Me.'" (*Life of Christ*, pp. 456-457.)

He seems utterly unconscious as to the strangely self-contradictory treatment, from his point of view, of Mary and of the other women by our Lord.

We quote from the Rev. Albert Barnes, "This passage has given rise to a variety of interpretations. Jesus required from Thomas to touch Him, . . . and it has been difficult to ascertain why He forbids this now to Mary. The reason why He directed Thomas to do this was, that He doubted

whether He had been restored to life. Mary did not doubt that. The reason why He forbade her to touch Him now, is to be sought in the circumstances of the case." And again, "'Do not *delay* here. Other opportunities will yet be afforded to see Me. I have not yet ascended, that is, I am not *about* to ascend *immediately*, but shall remain yet on earth to afford opportunity to My disciples to enjoy My presence.' From Matt. XXVIII:9 it appears that the women when they met Jesus, held Him by the feet and worshiped Him. This species of adoration it was probably the intention of Mary to offer, and this, *at that time*, Jesus forbade, and directed her to go at once and give His disciples notice that He had risen." (*Notes on the Gospels*, p. 389.)

A former pastor of the First Congregational church of Detroit, Zachary Eddy, D.D., in his excellent *Life of Christ*, says, at page 733, that the words "All hail!" addressed to the other women, "were His first words after His resurrection," and adds that "they reverently approached Him; . . . held Him by the feet; . . . worshiped Him." And then he actually declares, on page 735, that when Mary Magdalene, in the ecstasy of her love, faith, and joy, "struggles to embrace His feet;" and "would renew the former intercourse, . . . He

shrinks away from contact with her." But why? Because, forsooth, "she clings to the humanity of His humiliation."

Says Cunningham Geikie, D.D., "'Rabboni,' said she, in the country tongue they both loved so well—My Teacher! and was about to fall on His neck in uncontrollable emotion.

"'Touch Me not,' said He, drawing back, 'for I have not yet ascended to the Father, but go to My brethren, and say to them, I ascend.' . . .

"Meanwhile the other women had come near, and hearing and seeing what had passed, kneeled in lowly worship. As they approached, Jesus greeted them with the salutation they had, doubtless, often heard from His lips—'All hail'—and the sight of Mary adoring Him, left them no question of its being their Lord. He had withheld Mary from any approach to the tender freedom of former days, but He now stood still while the lowly band, Mary doubtless among them, held Him by the feet, and did Him lowliest reverence. Then, as they kneeled, came the words, grateful to their hearts, 'Be not afraid! Go, tell My brethren to go into Galilee, and they will see Me there.'

"So saying, He was gone."

A more pitiful and extraordinary intellectual somersault, on the part of so excellent and able a

scholar, is scarcely conceivable! The thrilling message, which our Lord entrusted to Mary Magdalene, is thus absolutely robbed of all its solemn import. And what then becomes of the evangelist Mark's explicit statement, that "He appeared first to Mary Magdalene," if the other women were there the very next minute? And what need was there of commanding her to tell the disciples, that one of these days He was going to return to the Father, when, in the very next breath almost, He ordered her and the other women to tell them to meet Him in Galilee? If that were all, then one might reverently wonder why the Savior did not deliver the earlier message Himself, rather than entrust it even to this devoted woman.

Isaac Da Costa, an eminent Dutch poet and theologian, in his truly excellent *Bijbellezingen*, remarks that, by saying, "For I have not yet ascended to My Father," the Lord mollified and explained His previous word, as meaning, Let it suffice you for this time to have *seen* Me. I have not yet departed for good, and for some time I am still coming back to you. Forsooth, heaven and earth had now become one realm, and unseen He ascended and descended as often as it suited His purposes. (*Zevende Deel*, pp. 363 and 365.) But even Da Costa has not a word to say as to why the Lord thus came

and went, or whether He did immediately ascend to the Father.

Suffer a brief remark in passing. To talk, as do some of the writers above quoted, about a spiritual touching by faith, after the Lord should have ascended to heaven, as of more importance, is, under the circumstances, the sheerest nonsense, and is like flying in the very face of Holy Writ. It was by means of the most manifold, clear, and infallible "proofs," and that "by the space of forty days" (Acts I:3), that our Lord demonstrated the absolute certainty of His bodily resurrection, and so He "was declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by" His "resurrection from" among "the dead" (Rom. I:4). The aged apostle John glories in this thrice-blessed fact. "That which we have heard, that which we have seen with our eyes, that which we beheld, and our hands handled, concerning the Word of life" (I. John I:1). Everything was here at stake, and hence Paul cries out, "If Christ hath not been raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins!" (I. Cor. XV:17). Little wonder is it that the enemies of the truth are for ever trying to get rid of, or to obscure, this transcendently amazing fact that our Lord rose bodily from the tomb! But, as Da Costa has well said, In order that the apostles

might be able to proclaim the Gospel to the nations, it was absolutely needful that they be eye- and ear-witnesses of the Lord's resurrection, by seeing Him, and communing with Him, after He had risen. (Ibid., p. 346.)

"A Commentary on the Holy Bible by various writers, edited by the Rev. J. R. Dummelow, M.A., of Queen's College, Cambridge," published in 1915 by the Macmillan Company, has the following, "'Touch Me not,' etc. I have not come to renew the old intimacy, but am on the point of returning to My Father. When I am enthroned in heaven, you shall touch Me once more, not, however, with the physical touch of your hands, but with the spiritual touch of a living faith. 'I ascend,' viz., after forty days." This author adds, however, "But many recent writers maintain that our Lord ascended immediately after the Resurrection, that He was in heaven during the forty days of earthly manifestation, and that the event called the Ascension (Acts. I.) was only His final farewell to the disciples; not His entry into glory." Who these "recent writers" are I have thus far tried in vain to discover.

As to the direction to Mary Magdalene to go to His brethren, a very few additional quotations may not be out of place.

"He means her to gather from this that His ap-

pearance is not as yet a super-terrestrial and glorified one. Glorification, however, does not put an end to the brotherly feeling" (Meyer). "The word is designed to speak peace to the disciples concerning their flight" (Bengel). "It is the intimation of the relationship of reconciliation" (Apollinaris, Luther, Bucer).

"'I ascend' . . . The immanent ascension spoken of as already present, since He even now finds Himself in the new heavenly state, or transition state, which is the condition of ascension. . . . Thus is Magdalene made the first Evangelist of the resurrection to the apostolic circle itself, the Lord having also first appeared to her" (Lange, *Commentary*, pp. 610-611).

But let this remarkably strange hotchpotch suffice by way of introduction.

"Jesus saith unto her, Mary. She turned herself, and saith unto Him in Hebrew, Rabboni; which is to say, Teacher!" Literally, My Teacher! "Jesus saith unto her, Touch Me not; for I am not yet ascended unto the Father: but go unto My brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto My Father and your Father, and My God and your God. Mary Magdalene cometh and telleth the disciples, I have seen the Lord; and that He had said these things unto her" (John XX:16-18).

We remark, first of all, that the common interpretation of our Lord's message to the disciples, as given to Mary Magdalene, changes both the perfect and the present tense of the Greek verb ANABAINO into the future, and that too without the slightest warrant from Scripture itself, and, as we will venture to add, without any possible occasion for so doing, since all that is needed to make the Savior's meaning perfectly clear, and easily understood as well, even by a little child, is for scholars to cease trying to foist their vain conjectures upon the plain and positive declarations of Holy Writ.

Another criticism should be added right here. There is no warrant whatever for supposing that the Greek verb APTOMAI means anything more than simply to touch. Throughout the Gospels it means just that and nothing more. See, for example, such passages as Matt. VIII:3, 15; IX:29; XVII:7; Mark III:10; V:27, 28, 30, 31; VI:56; VII:33; Luke VII:14.

Writes the apostle Paul to the Hebrew Christians, "Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of a heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our confession, even Jesus" (Heb. III:1). He is not only our Prophet, and our coming King, but also our eternal High Priest. Once a year, on the great day of atonement, the high priest of the

Mosaic economy entered into the holy of holies in the tabernacle, or rather, as our Revised Version tells us, in the "Tent of Meeting," and from the days of Solomon, into the most holy place in the temple, there to meet with the God of Israel. (See Lev. XVI:2, 34.) "But into the second the high priest alone, once in the year, not without blood, which he offereth for himself, and for the errors of the people" (Heb. IX:7).

On that great day of expiation no one else, not even of the house of Aaron, was allowed to enter the tabernacle with him, until after he had presented himself, with the blood of atonement, in the presence of Jehovah. See Lev. XVI:17.

Even so our blessed Redeemer, as the great High Priest of the people of God, must not only lay down His life for the sheep that the Father had given Him; but must, moreover, present the completed offering in the presence of God the Father; *not*, as the Holy Spirit expressly declares in Hebrews IX, by entering "into a holy place made with hands, . . . *but* into heaven itself, now to appear before the face of God for us" (v. 24). "But Christ having come a High Priest of the good things to come, through the greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this creation, nor yet through the blood of goats and

calves, but through His own blood, entered in once for all into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption" (v's 11-12).

It was, as we believe, in fulfillment of His commission as our great High Priest, of which the Hebrew high priest of a dispensation which was now to come to an end, was more especially a type in the solemn transactions of the great day of atonement, that the risen Christ must, first of all, present the offering, which He had made for guilty man on Golgotha's cross, to God the Father in the heavenly tabernacle.

Until the sacrifice had first been presented to the Father, sinful man must not touch that sacred body which had been bruised for us. And yet, even as the people of old, while standing in the outer courts, may have caught some glimpse of the high priest ere he entered the holiest of all, to appear in the immediate presence of Jehovah, even so our Lord suffered His people, in the person of Mary Magdalene, to catch a momentary glimpse of Himself, ere He ascended to His Father and to their Father, to His God and to their God.

But why did He choose Mary Magdalene for so exalted a privilege? We know not, and yet cannot but believe that that profound scholar, Judge

Joel Jones, LL.D., is quite correct in supposing that she was singled out for this purpose, because she was such a signal proof of our Lord's complete mastery, as the Son of Man, over the powers of darkness. It is certainly noteworthy that the evangelists always mention her by way of pre-eminence, whenever they speak of the women who so devotedly followed the Savior, and ministered to His needs. Not only so, but both Mark and Luke call special attention to the fact, that it was out of her that the Lord Jesus had cast seven demons. I. John III:8 reads, "To this end was the Son of God manifested, that He might destroy the works of the Devil." And so we can but surmise, where positive assertion would be altogether out of place, that it may have been in the Divine purpose, that the risen Christ, just as He was on the point of ascending, to present to the Father the offering He had made for "our sins, in His body upon the tree" (I. Pet. II:24), should thus momentarily reveal Himself to this extraordinary ensample of the power of that victorious grace, that during all the ages would rescue the lost children of men from the power of the Devil. May be that was why He suffered one, whom He had snatched from the very jaws of hell, to see Him ere He presented the offering He had

made on the cross in the holy of holies in the heavenly places.⁵

On His return from the Father He was ready, like the high priest of old, to show Himself openly to His people, and ready as well to give them the amplest proof, by being handled by them, and by even eating and drinking in their presence, that He was indeed the very same Jesus of Nazareth, Who had gone "about doing good" (Acts X:38), to Whose wonderful teachings they had so often listened, and of Whose marvelous signs and wonders they had been eye-witnesses.

If the question be asked, How could all this have taken place in the little space of time that intervened between our Lord's interview with Mary Magdalene and the meeting with the women mentioned in Matthew XXVIII, we may well ask, What were earthly measurements of time and space to Him, to Whose resurrected body barred and bolted doors presented not the slightest hindrance, whenever He chose to come in or to go out? The prophet Daniel presented his prayers and supplications before Jehovah his God, and while he "was speaking in prayer, the man Gabriel," who stands "in the presence of God" (Luke I:19), "being

⁵ *Jesus and the Coming Glory; or, Notes on Scripture*, pp. 473-475.

caused to fly swiftly, touched" him "about the time of the evening oblation" (Dan. IX:21). How long did it take the angel to descend from before the throne of God to this earth? Let Gabriel himself tell us. "At the beginning of thy supplication," said he to Daniel, "the commandment went forth, and I am come to tell thee" (v. 23). Says the apostle, Heb. IV:14, "Having then a great High Priest, Who hath passed *through* the heavens, Jesus the Son of God." And how far was the distance from earth to the highest heavens for Him, of Whom the Father Almighty has said, "And let all the angels of God worship Him" (Heb. I:6)? Alas for us, blind mortals, when we undertake to measure heaven's latitudes and longitudes by the arithmetic of earth!

That same evening, while the disciples were met together behind doors carefully shut, "for fear of the Jews" (John XX:19), all of a sudden they beheld their beloved Master standing in their midst. And please note that He no longer addresses them as an inhabitant of this earth, but as one Who, even as Man, already belongs to another sphere. "And He said unto them, These are My words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you" (Luke XXIV:44). Put such language as that in the mouth even of His friend Lazarus, who had "been

dead four days" (John XI:29), and you perceive at once how incongruous and absurd it would have been for him to talk after that fashion. But the Christ of God had ceased to have His permanent abode on earth. Henceforth He simply came and went as a Visitor to our globe, of which He will only gain complete possession when He comes a second time, in the glory of His Father, with the angels of His power, and with His glorified saints,

"To proclaim . . . the day of vengeance of our
God;" (Is. LXI:2.)

"To execute . . . the judgment written."
(Ps. CXLIX:9.)

But to resume. Our Lord had said to the Father, on the night of His betrayal, "While I was with them, I kept them in Thy name which Thou hast given Me: and I guarded them" (John XVII:12). To His disciples He had said, that same evening, "I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may be with you for ever" (Ch. XIV:16). He, moreover, at the same time assured them, that the blessed Comforter, the Spirit of truth, could not come to do His special work for them, until after He Himself had taken His departure, and had returned to the Father. Not only so, but He had likewise given them the

definite assurance, that while the world should behold Him no more, they should see Him (v. 19). "Now I go unto Him that sent Me" (Ch. XVI: 5). "I go to the Father, and ye behold Me no more" (v. 10). "A little while, and ye behold Me no more; and again a little while, and ye shall see Me" (v. 16). "Do ye inquire among yourselves concerning this, that I said, A little while, and ye behold Me not, and again a little while, and ye shall see Me?" "Verily, verily, I say unto you, that ye shall weep and lament; . . . ye shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy. . . . Ye therefore now have sorrow: but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no one taketh away from you" (v's 19, 20, 22). Their sorrow was then already coming upon them; it absolutely overwhelmed them as their loved Teacher was being crucified, like a common malefactor, between two highway robbers. But the fullness of their joy came to them on the very day when He rose from among the dead, when they saw Him again, and in times of peril, persecution, or death, for Jesus' sake, it never left them! And yet our Lord had told them that they should not see Him, until after He had first gone to the Father. What a joyous message then was it that He sent to them, when about to ascend to the

Father, "I ascend unto My Father and your Father, and My God and your God." It meant that very soon He would return to them, when He would banish for ever their sorrow of heart!

But how did He make sure to them the perpetuity of their joy from that day on? The only rational answer, we submit, is that He at once committed them to the keeping power of the Holy Spirit, Whose coming as their perpetual Comforter he had told them, could not take place until He Himself had first gone to the Father. He had now returned from the Father, and therefore, on the very evening of His resurrection, "He breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Spirit." But let us refresh our minds by giving this word of committal its proper setting. "When therefore it was evening, on that day, the first day of the week, and when the doors were shut where the disciples were, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you. And when He had said this, He showed unto them His hands and His side. The disciples therefore were glad, when they saw the Lord. Jesus therefore said to them again, Peace be unto you: as the Father hath sent Me, even so send I you. And when He had said this, He breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Spirit:

whose soever sins ye forgive, they are forgiven unto them; whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained" (John XX:19-23). True it is that He did not then impart to them the Spirit's wonder-working powers, which were to be conferred upon them publicly, when "the day of Pentecost" should have "fully come" (Acts II:1). Still they would no longer be dependent upon Christ's personal, bodily presence.

A very few words must suffice, in conclusion, in regard to the other accounts given us, in the synoptical Gospels and elsewhere, relating to the ascension of the Redeemer. And first of all, to quote the language of Prof. Johann Gottfried Kinkel, of the University of Bonn, in his *Theologische Studien und Kritiken*, "We must presuppose . . . that the notices which the New Testament furnishes us on the ascension of Christ, in respect to the time, place, and circumstances, are wholly inconsistent with each other." (*Heidelberg*, Vol. XIV, 1841, translated by Prof. B. B. Edwards, Andover, in *Bibliotheca Sacra*, Vol. I, No. 1, 1844.)

Brethren, there is not a shred of internal evidence that Luke XXIV is not absolutely continuous! And no other argument has ever been produced, to prove that there was an interval of forty days between the main part of the chapter and the four closing

verses. Had it not been for the fact that scholars were somehow or other possessed with the idea, that there could have been only one ascension, no one might ever have tried to break up the historic continuity of the evangelist's account of the transactions of the first Lord's Day.

As to the place whence He ascended, we read in verses 50 and 51, "And he led them out until they were over against Bethany: and He lifted up His hands, and blessed them. And it came to pass, while He blessed them, He parted from them, and was carried up into heaven." How far were they from Jerusalem? "About fifteen furlongs off," as John XI:18 informs us. In Acts I:12 the same writer, i. e., Luke, declares that the apostles returned from the place where they had seen their Lord ascend, viz., "From the mount called Olivet, which is nigh unto Jerusalem, a Sabbath day's journey off," five, or possibly, six, furlongs distant. Let those who will, try to make it appear that the sacred writer meant to say that those two localities were one and the same. We are sincerely sorry for those who feel compelled to make such a futile attempt.

And what of Matthew's account of the Savior's interview with the disciples after His resurrection, which took place neither in Jerusalem, nor yet near

Bethany, or anywhere on the mount of Olives, but in Galilee, on "the mountain where Jesus had appointed them" (Ch. XXVIII:16)? And whither did the Lord betake Himself, after He had then and there commissioned them to go and disciple "all the nations" (v. 19)? Where else did He go but to those heavenly regions, where, and not on earth, was now his proper abode? Matthew indeed says nothing as to the manner of His ascent, but that, as Kinkel suggests, "can be explained in part . . . from the rhetorical nature of the composition: he would close with a sublime word. And yet," as this writer adds, "it seems impossible that a fact so slightly noticed, should be the same with that glorious ascension Luke has described in the Acts."

Finally, it is certainly remarkable how that exact and matchless logician, the apostle Paul, in I. Cor. XV:5-8, uses the words ΕΙΤΑ or ΕΠΕΙΤΑ and ΕΣΧΑΤΟΝ, "then" and "last," the first term four times; evidently wishing to be understood as speaking of a definite historical sequence of events. It is also noteworthy that he uses the very same Greek verb, ΟΡΗΘΗΑΙ, in describing the Savior's appearance to himself, as when he speaks of His being seen by Cephas and the rest.

And are we quite sure that the appearance to "above five hundred brethren at once," took place

before the scene described in Acts I, or even before Pentecost? If so, then how did it happen that only "about a hundred and twenty" men and women were "gathered together" (Acts I:15) in Jerusalem, waiting, in obedience to the Lord's command, for the enduement from on high? After Pentecost, when thousands had been "added to the Lord" (Acts II:41; IV:4; V:14), the bringing together of over "five hundred" men presents, of course, no difficulty whatever; especially when we bear in mind that Paul says nothing as to the place where Christ revealed Himself to them. And such a post-Pentecostal revelation would have been as much in harmony with our Lord's conduct, and that of the holy angels, towards His Church at that day, as were His different appearances to the apostle himself. And if this appearance "to above five hundred brethren at once" was post-Pentecostal, then we must likewise conclude, according to I. Cor. XV, that our Lord did not take final leave of "the apostles whom He had chosen" (Acts I:2) ten days before Pentecost, but that He met with them, in a body, at least once again after that notable day.

If this paper shall lead any of you to conclude that our Lord's permanent place of abode, during the forty days that intervened between His resurrection and His triumphal ascent "from the mount

called Olivet," was not on earth, but "in the heavenly places," surrounded by the angels of His power, then it may also lead you to consider whether this does not at least give us some slight intimation, as to where will be the habitation, or, if you please, the more usual abiding place, of Christ and of His joint-heirs, in the coming kingdom of God, when, as we are assured in Hebrews II, they are to take the place of the angelic hosts in administering the affairs of this world, and when, as kings and priests "unto our God," "they" shall "reign upon the earth" (Rev. V:10).

THE EFFICACY AND PROFITABLENESS OF PRAYER

ANSWERS TO CERTAIN OBJECTIONS OF MODERN SKEPTICISM

Job XXI: 14-15.

*"Therefore they say unto God, Depart from us;
For we desire not the knowledge of Thy ways.
What is the Almighty that we should serve Him?
And what profit should we have, if we pray unto
Him?"*

THE Efficacy and Profitableness of Prayer:—such is the twofold subject, as suggested by these words of Holy Writ, to which your attention is now invited.

It is of the wicked who prospered in his day that Job tells us,

"Therefore they say unto God, Depart from us,
For we desire not the knowledge of Thy ways."

The very blessings which God bestowed upon them made them lose sight of the bountiful Giver, and filled them with a spirit of pride and self-suffi-

ciency. And hence too they cried out, in words of daring impiety,

“What is the Almighty, that we should serve Him?
And what profit should we have, if we pray unto
Him?”

It is indeed a bold, bald sort of atheism that confronts us, in this language of Job's godless contemporaries. And yet, my hearers, let us not seek to disguise the painful fact; if this is not always the language, yet it is ever the spirit, of the unbelieving heart of the natural man. And however much our modern objectors to the efficacy of prayer may squirm beneath the odium of the ugly charge of atheism, yet it is justly preferred against them; for he who scouts the very idea of prayer, whatever his professions may be, does in fact deny the very existence of the only living and true God.

Let us look the question squarely, honestly in the face,—Is prayer a mere empty, profitless, meaningless superstition? or is it that which brings the soul of man into a living, blessed communion with the great and august Ruler of the universe? Is it a useless, needless waste of breath? or has it really power to move the arm that moves the world?

Our remarks will necessarily be confined pretty much to a single point of view, viz., to suggest an-

swers to certain objections of modern skepticism.

The question has often been raised, Why should men pray at all? "What profit should we have, if we pray unto Him?" The answer to this and like queries will be best gained in the light of certain other and more specific questions.

Are we sinners? or is man a pure, spotless being, who has never in a single instance violated any law of God? Will you ask that criminal, as he stands trembling at the bar of human justice, why he troubles himself to plead with his judge for pardon, or for the mitigation of his sentence, when a felon's death may await him on the morrow? And do you suppose that the angels in glory deem it a strange or preposterous thing, when they see a member of our fallen race, "every imagination of the thoughts of" whose "heart" has been "only evil continually" (Gen. VI:5), crying to God for mercy the moment he comes to his right mind, and realizes that avenging justice is on his track? Ah! my impenitent hearer, if you only knew that that self-righteousness of which you boast, is no better in the estimation of high Heaven, than the most abominably filthy rags in which squalid poverty arrays itself, you too would at once raise the cry of the publican, "God, be Thou merciful to me a sinner!" (Luke XVIII:13). May the Lord in mercy open your eyes!

But again—Are we weak and helpless? Is it reasonable for the little child, that has but barely learned to walk, as it stumbles along the rough and stony road, to ask its earthly father for the needed assistance? And if he be a man, and not a monster, will he turn a deaf ear to the cry of the little one? Saith the Scripture,

“Like as a father pitieth his children,
So Jehovah pitieth them that fear Him.
For He knoweth our frame;
He remembereth that we are dust.”

(Ps. CIII:13-14.)

The Christian has indeed secured the vantage-ground, being no longer under condemnation. Still he is at first but a babe in Christ, and ever after, as long as he abides in this mortal flesh, he has to contend with the inherent corruption of his fallen nature, and against a host of mighty spiritual foes from without. Must he then go forth to battle upon his own charges, in his own unaided strength, against the world, the flesh, and the Devil? When he cries to God for help, will the heavens mock his hopes, and be as brass over his head? It is not thus that the inspired Word speaks. When the Ephesian disciples were urged to put on “the whole armor of God,” that thus they might be enabled to resist

manfully the onslaughts of the powers of darkness, there follows the emphatic exhortation, "With all prayer and supplication, praying at all seasons in the Spirit, and watching thereunto in all perseverance and supplication for all the saints" (Eph. VI:13, 18). In the XLVI Psalm the ransomed, persecuted, struggling Church joyfully exclaims:

"God is our refuge and strength,
A very present help in trouble.

Jehovah of hosts is with us;
The God of Jacob is our refuge. Selah."
(v's 1, 7.)

Language which Martin Luther loved to repeat to himself in his hours of despondency, and which suggested that noble hymn, which did so much to help on the cause of the Reformation, and the singing of which has so greatly encouraged the people of God from that day to this:

"A mighty Fortress is our God,
A Bulwark never failing,
Our Helper He amid the flood
Of mortal ills prevailing."

"Again I say unto you," is the explicit declaration of our Redeemer, "that if two of you shall agree on earth, as touching anything that they shall

ask, it shall be done for them of My Father Who is in heaven" (Matt. XVIII:19). And the writer to the Hebrews, in view of the fact that "the Son of God," our Lord Jesus Christ, is both a great High Priest, and One Who can have a fellow-feeling with us in our every weakness, exclaims, "Let us therefore draw near with boldness unto the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy, and may find grace to help us in time of need" (Ch. IV:14, 16).

But how, it is asked, can prayer alter the fixed laws of the universe?

That is an old question, and a capital one, and a question too which many a blind devotee of the physical sciences loves to make use of.

Now let it be noticed, first of all, that this sort of reasoning is based upon a very sandy foundation. The major premise of the objector's argument, if not utterly false, is very far from being proven. Who can tell us what laws, especially of the physical universe, are absolutely fixed? And indeed it matters little whether you refer to the universe of matter or of mind.

Certain moral laws are fixed beyond all possibility of change. But why? Simply because they have their source in the unalterable holiness, and in the inflexible justice and truth, of Him Who inhab-

iteth the praises of eternity, and Who is "the same yesterday and to-day, yea and for ever" (Heb. XIII:8), and "with Whom can be no variation, neither shadow that is cast by turning" (James I: 17). Were He man, and not God, who could tell but falsehood might be truth to-morrow, and truth falsehood; for how often has not man succeeded in making "the worse appear the better reason"? Nay, in how many cases has not men's faithlessness to the dictates of their consciences, at length utterly disqualified them to distinguish between truth and error, between right and wrong? Because our God is the God of truth, therefore we know that truth shall abide; in no other way could we be absolutely certain of it.

In regard to the physical universe it may be remarked that no law, so far as is known to man, is more universal in its application than the law of gravitation, according to which a larger body attracts a smaller one. And yet every school-boy acts in utter defiance of that law, every time that he tosses a ball, or puffs a soap-bubble, into the air. And in whatever way that stupendous miracle was performed, when "the sun stayed in the midst of heaven, and hasted not to go down about a whole day" (Jos X:13); yet is it anything else save the most arrant presumption, to maintain that, in an-

swer to Joshua's prayer, God could not have arrested, for even a single day, the action of this law? Or are we to come to the pitiable conclusion, that He Who created and Who upholds all things by the word of His power, has no control over a law which He Himself has ordained, and which a little child may daily violate with impunity?

As another has suggested, it is indeed a question as to what was really most miraculous in the life of our Lord upon earth, the mighty works by means of which He demonstrated His Messiahship and Divine glory, or that "hiding of His power" (Hab. III:4), which at other times so effectually veiled the Godhead, that even the favored twelve were scarce aware of His true character.

Furthermore, it may be that, in the life to come, the things which now we deem miraculous will then be common, while what is now esteemed common will then be accounted miraculous.

And who will tell us what laws are most essential? How often does not man, in making use of one physical law, utterly disregard another law? May not the great Lawmaker do as much Himself? And how do we know but that every seeming violation, or setting aside, of known laws, is itself but the carrying out of some higher law, undiscovered as yet by man?

But again. God is the Being of absolute perfection. He has promised to answer prayer. Is it not worth while then that this or that physical law should be set aside, if need be, in order that His word may remain inviolate? And which is the greater, the higher law? Is it the physical, or the moral? Are the Divine modes of operation in the material universe of more, or of less, importance than the attributes of His spotless moral excellence?

His truth and His mercy stand pledged to secure the ultimate and complete salvation of every one who repents of his sins. And the double question of our blessed Redeemer, "For what shall a man be profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and forfeit his life? or what shall a man give in exchange for his life?" (Matt. XVI:26), fully warrants us in saying, that a single human soul is of more value than this whole terrestrial globe, yes, than all the material universe combined. And little would we ever hear in the way of objection to the need and the power of prayer, if men realized, on the one hand, the worth of the undying soul, and, on the other, the unspeakable and endless woe to which guilt exposes it! But, alas! many a modern hero-worshiper, though ready enough to turn his fellow-man, or even himself, into a god, has not the faintest conception of the true dignity of man, as a crea-

ture come from God, and whose existence is to run parallel with the endless years of the Eternal! Nor can they have any just apprehension of the terrors of Divine wrath, whose proud and stubborn unbelief closes their eyes against the righteous demands of His moral law.

But we must turn from this seeming digression.

A certain class of physical scientists, like the late Prof. John Tyndall, may undertake to treat with supercilious contempt the supposition,¹ "that the Builder and Sustainer of" the myriad worlds that revolve throughout immensity, "should contract Himself to a burning bush, or behave in other familiar ways ascribed to Him" in the Scriptures. Of course, if Professor Tyndall had read his Bible with a little more care, he would have known better than to talk about God as "contracting Himself." But are these men after all really the grossest of materialists and pantheists, so that they cannot even conceive of the Godhead except as an immense body? And, notwithstanding all their fine talk, how much better, for any practical purpose, is their faith than that of the most out-and-out atheist?

These wise men of the world may talk of all the truly amazing ways, in which Jehovah has come down to our human frailty, as things that appear

¹ Tyndall's *Fragments of Science*, p. 420.

like "astounding incongruities to the scientific man": but, while even such as they hardly dare to say that these "incongruities," as they presume to call them, are impossible, and while they often feel forced to confess their utter ignorance in regard to the ways of God, even in the domain of nature; we, who have an open Bible before us, and who can confidently affirm with the apostle Paul, "He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not also with Him freely give us all things?" (Rom. VIII:32); we, who know from this same blessed volume of truth, that the angelic hosts are "all ministering spirits, sent forth to do service for the sake of them that shall inherit salvation"; we, who can recall the comparative value which our Lord has put upon the soul of man, and who know how He gave Himself unto the cruel and shameful death of the cross for its redemption; surely, my brethren, no one of us need stagger through unbelief, either at the promises of Him, Who has declared that He will heed the cry of the humble, giving "good things to them that ask Him" (Matt. VII:11), nor yet at the testimony of His people, when they tell us how they cried "unto Jehovah in their trouble, and" how He has brought "them out of their distresses" (Ps. CVII:28).

Another consideration should be added right here. What are these so-called fixed and eternal laws of nature? When "Jehovah answered Job out of the whirlwind," He put to him these among many other like questions—questions before which even modern physical science, with all its truly wonderful researches and discoveries, must yet stand abashed, confessing its utter impotency—

"Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of
the earth?

Declare, if thou hast understanding.

Who determined the measures thereof, if thou
knowest?

Or who stretched the line upon it?

Whereupon were the foundations thereof fastened?

Or who laid the corner-stone thereof?

When the morning stars sang together,

And all the sons of God shouted for joy?"

.

"Canst thou bind the cluster of the Pleiades,

Or loose the bands of Orion?

Canst thou lead forth the Mazzaroth in their sea-
son?

Or canst thou guide the Bear with her train?

Knowest thou the ordinances of the heavens?

Canst thou establish the dominion thereof in the
earth?

Canst thou lift up thy voice to the clouds,

That abundance of waters may cover thee?

Canst thou send forth the lightnings, that they may
go,
And say unto thee, Here we are?
Who hath put wisdom in the inward parts?
Or who hath given understanding to the mind?"
(Job XXXVIII:1, 4-7, 31-36.)

And the truly wise man, who has become aware of the limitations of human knowledge, will be ready to confess with Job as to all that, that they are

"Things too wonderful for me, which I knew not."
(Ch. XLII:3.)

After all man's attempts to unravel the mysteries that everywhere environ him, the final and the only reasonable explanation will ever remain the same; and that explanation, the only one in which the rational mind can fully rest, refers all to "The everlasting God, Jehovah, the Creator of the ends of the earth," Who "fainteth not, neither is weary; there is no searching of His understanding" (Is. XL:28).

These so-called fixed and eternal laws of nature are simply "the ordinances of the heavens"; God's methods of regulating the worlds that He has made. Were there no system, no regularity, no harmony about the movements of the material universe, then

all man's plans and labors would be subject to endless confusion. "Seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease" (Gen. VIII:22), even as Jehovah promised to Noah when he came out of the ark. And yet, with all this general certainty, is not God continually teaching us, by the very uncertainty which encompasses all these, never to lose sight of Himself, as not only having established the seasons with their laws, but likewise as being the ever-living Administrator of His own government, enforcing, or setting aside, according to His sovereign good-pleasure, the laws which He has ordained and established?

To claim that God is utterly powerless to change the mode of His administration, is in effect to tell us that He is after all but the slave of a blind, resistless fatalism; and that, having once established certain laws, they are thenceforth for ever beyond His control. And what is this to all intents and purposes; what else but practical atheism? For whatever professions such people may make, they evidently have no faith in, but absolutely deny, the only living and true God, Who reveals Himself in His Word as that glorious, that everywhere present Being, Who "doeth according to His will in the army of heaven, and among the

inhabitants of the earth" (Dan. IV:35) ; and hence, if they worship, or adore, any other god but self, or a fellow-creature, it can only be the unsubstantial product of an unsanctified imagination.

From all such vagaries of unbelief, however, let us turn to the noble declarations of that greatest perhaps of mathematicians and natural philosophers, Sir Isaac Newton, who, at the end of "a large volume all bristling with figures and calculations," in which he "set forth his discoveries," says, "The Master of the heavens governs all things, not as being the soul of the world, but as being the Sovereign of the universe. It is on account of His sovereignty that we call Him the Sovereign God. He governs all things, those which are, and those which may be. He is the one God, and the same God, everywhere and always. We admire Him because of His perfections, we reverence and adore Him because of His sovereignty. A God without sovereignty, without providence, and without object in His works, would be only destiny or nature. Now, from a blind metaphysical necessity, everywhere and always the same, could arise no variety; all that diversity of created things according to places and times (which constitutes the order and life of the universe) could only have been produced by the

thought and will of a Being Who is *the Being*, existing by Himself and necessarily.”²

As some of you may recall, not a little noise was once made, in this country as well as in the British Isles, by what was known as Professor Tyndall’s prayer gauge. Two wards were to be selected in a certain hospital; for the sick and the wounded in one of these wards Christians everywhere were to pray, while for those in the other no prayer was to be offered up; and the result was to demonstrate to the scientific world, and to the rest of mankind, whether or no God hears and answers prayer.

It were a waste of time, perhaps, at this late day, to show the heartlessness of such a proposition; to point out the utter absurdity, impossibility, and worthlessness of such a test; or to characterize fitly so daring an insult against high Heaven, which would have put to the blush many an ancient Greek and Roman pagan, with his deference and piety towards the gods whom he ignorantly worshiped.

We refer to it mainly as furnishing a pertinent illustration of what our Lord told Nicodemus, that “men loved the darkness rather than the light” (John III:19); and to point out the fact, that however zealous men may be in their scientific or his-

² See *Newton’s Principia*, or Naville’s *The Heavenly Father*, pp. 181-182.

torical researches, their minds may yet remain hermetically sealed against the reception of the most obvious truths, if the heart is at enmity with God. For what could well be more perfectly amazing, than such stark blindness on the part of an eminent scientist, to the actual results of prayer? At one time, when our noted American evangelist, Dwight L. Moody, labored in the cities of New York and Philadelphia,³ in the one case two hundred, and in the other one hundred drunkards, were hopefully converted to God. After about a year it was ascertained that out of the two hundred only one, while out of the one hundred not even one, had gone back to his cups! And the history of the Church of God in our own day, and in all the ages of the past, teems with facts illustrative of the power of prayer to move the arm that moves the world, and to draw fallen man upward toward heaven and toward God! And yet these men, who are constantly sounding a trumpet before them, in proof of their zeal in search of truth, deliberately turn their back upon all this multiform and ever increasing mass of evidence, and, like the unbelieving Pharisees of old, seek after a sign from heaven; and thus, as Cowper has so well said, does

³ In the winter of 1875-1876.

“Blind unbelief” ever “err,
And scan” God’s “work in vain.”

While the world now, as in apostolic times, through its vaunted wisdom, fails to know God, yet we may rejoice to know that even in our own day, the really great masters in the domain of physical science are, in very many cases, devout disciples of the despised Nazarene.

Professor Tyndall is himself forced to give this testimony, in regard to the childlike faith of Michael Faraday, whose discoveries¹ “in nearly every branch of physics,” have given him a world-wide fame, and who passed from earth August 25, 1867, in the faith of that Redeemer, Whose humble, loving disciple he had ever been.² “He said grace,”³—Tyndall is describing a visit which, while a young man he enjoyed at Faraday’s—“He said grace. I am almost ashamed to call his prayer a ‘saying’ of grace. In the language of Scripture, it might be described as the petition of a son, into whose heart God had sent the Spirit of His Son, and who with absolute trust asked a blessing from his Father.” A leading man of science, of whom Prof. Ernest Naville, of

¹ Chambers’s Encyclopædia.

² See *The Life and Letters of Faraday* by Dr. Bence Jones, Vol. II, pp. 428-486, *passim*.

³ *Fragments of Science*, p. 350.

the University of Geneva, inquired as to his estimate of Faraday, returned this answer,⁴ "You may boldly say that, by the unanimous consent of men of science, Mr. Faraday, in regard both to the greatness and range of his discoveries, is the first natural philosopher living." And only a few years before his death, Faraday reaffirmed his conviction,⁵ "that he has never recognized any incompatibility between science and faith, and makes the following declaration: Even in earthly matters I reckon that 'the invisible things of God, from the creation of the world, are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead.' "

To pray, my dear hearers, is simply to act in accordance with the nature God has given us. As says another, "So far from being below human dignity, prayer is the highest assertion of human dignity. It proclaims that man was made for God, and cannot live without Him." In proof of this we need but refer you to the well-known fact that all men everywhere, and in all ages of the world, have prayed in some way or other, whenever trouble and distress have suddenly overwhelmed them.

⁴ Naville's *The Heavenly Father, Lectures on Modern Atheism*. Downton's translation, p. 198.

⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 199-200.

At such times prayer has ever sprung spontaneously from the heaving breast of affrighted humanity.

Lactantius, a writer of the fourth century, speaking of the pagans of his day, says, "In their prosperity . . . then most of all does God escape the memory of men, when in the enjoyment of His benefits they ought to honor His divine beneficence. But if any weighty necessity shall press them, then they remember God. If the terror of war shall have resounded, if the pestilential force of diseases shall have overhung them, if long-continued drought shall have denied nourishment to the crops, if a violent tempest or hail shall have assailed them, they betake themselves to God, aid is implored from God, God is entreated to succor them. If any one is tossed about on the sea, the wind being furious, it is this *God* Whom he invokes. If any one is harassed by any violence, he implores His aid. If any one, reduced to the last extremity of poverty, begs for food, he appeals to God alone, and by His divine and matchless name alone he seeks to gain the compassion of men. Thus they never remember God, unless it be while they are in trouble. When fear has left them, and the dangers have withdrawn, then in truth they quickly hasten to the temples of the gods: they pour libations to them, they sacrifice to them, they crown them with garlands. But

to God, Whom they called upon in their necessity itself, they do not give thanks even in word. Thus from prosperity arises luxury; and from luxury, together with all other voices, there arises impiety towards God.”⁴

A friend of ours was one day conversing with some one in this city, who declared that religion was all a humbug, and that man was no more than any other animal; when he died, that was the end of him. One morning, not long after this, that same professed atheist awoke from his slumbers. He spoke to his wife, who lay at his side, telling her that it was time for them to arise; but she did not answer him. Then he reached out his hand to awaken her, when he was horrified to find her cold in death! What did he do? Bury her, as he would have buried a cow or a dog? No! the very first thing he did was to send for a minister of religion, thus giving the lie to his pretended atheism!

The late somewhat notorious Bradlaugh, having delivered a lecture in a certain English town in favor of infidelity, called upon any of his audience to reply to his argument, when a collier arose and spoke somewhat as follows:—“Maister Bradlaugh, me and my mate Jim were both Methodys, till one of these infidel chaps cam’ this way. Jim turned

⁴ *The Ante-Nicene Fathers*, Vol. VII, pp. 40-41.

infidel, and used to badger me about attending class-meetings and prayer-meetings. But one day in the pit a large cob of coal came down upon Jim's head. Jim thought he was killed, and, ah, mon! how he did holler." Then turning to Mr. Bradlaugh with a very knowing look, he said, "Young man, there's naught like cobs of coal for knocking infidelity out of a man."

Let us hold fast, my brethren, to our faith in God. What Jehovah hath said, shall not that come to pass? He has promised to hear and to answer the prayer of faith; shall He not perform it? Asks one:

"Say what is prayer, when it is prayer indeed?
The mighty utterance of a mighty need.
The man is praying, who doth press with might
Out of his darkness into God's own light."⁵

And having yourselves come into that glorious light of life, will you not plead earnestly with God, that He may bestow a like priceless boon upon those who know Him not?

And what shall we say to you who are still out of Christ, "having no hope, and without God in the world" (Eph. II:2), to whom the future is all dark and dismal? "Are you afraid of God!" asks

⁵ Archbishop Trench, in *Christian Lyrics*, p. 6.

the great Augustine. "Run to His arms!" Yes, sinner, to-day to the mercy-seat for shelter fly:

" 'Tis there thy soul shall find a safe retreat
When storms and tempests rise."

CHRIST'S INVITATION TO THE BURDENED AND WEARY

Matt. XI:28-30. *"Come unto Me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart; and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For My yoke is easy, and My burden is light."*

IN undertaking to discourse upon this wonderful invitation of our adorable Redeemer, it may not be out of place to offer, by way of preface, a brief exegetical criticism.

According to our English Bible this invitation is addressed to such as "labor and are heavy laden." The word "labor," however, fails to give full expression to the real import of the Savior's language. There is indeed no single English term that can adequately express the meaning of the original. The Dutch translators have rendered the Greek verb by a word that signifies being tired out, which certainly corresponds more exactly with the inspired text. But the German Bible uses a word, which is not only exceedingly expressive, but is also one which seems to convey the precise thought that was

in our Lord's mind, when He extended this gracious invitation. The German word here used is "Mühselig," a compound term, the first part of which signifies toil, trouble, pains; the latter denoting happiness, bliss, salvation. And thus, while the proper signification of the word is, to be full of pain, and to feel weary, miserable, and wretched, because of long continued and fruitless toil, its etymological import is, to have become weary and exhausted in the vain endeavor to secure present happiness, or eternal salvation.

These various, though analogous, significations, we doubt not, are all implied in the language of our Lord.

In confirmation of this definition of the term "labor," as found in the text, it may be remarked, further, that the same Greek verb which the Savior employed on this occasion, is used by the apostle John, where he tells us that the Lord Jesus sat on Jacob's well, because He was "*wearied* with His journey" (John IV:6). And it occurs likewise in Rev. II:3, where He commends the saints at Ephesus, because they had "not grown *weary*."

As to the phrase "heavy laden," as found in verse 28, it may suffice to remark that the Greek verb is analogous to the noun which is rendered "burden" in the 30th verse, and that both verb and noun

are used by our Lord, in denouncing the expositors and teachers of the Mosaic law, as when we read, Luke XI:46, "Woe unto you lawyers also! for *ye load* men with *burdens* grievous to be borne, and ye yourselves touch not the *burdens* with one of your fingers."

As another has remarked,¹ "The expressions labor and are heavy laden, in the first verse, answer exactly to yoke and burden in the last; and the two ideas comprehend all the modes in which working animals can be employed. They either draw or carry; in the former case they wear a *yoke*; in the latter, they bear a *burden*. There is then a beautiful contrast between the ideas in the first verse and those in the last. The bondage of the world and the flesh in the one is opposed to the happy enfranchisement implied in the service of Christ in the other."

It is evident, therefore, that the Savior's invitation to come to Him, is addressed to such as have become wearied and exhausted, in the vain and fruitless endeavor to find peace and rest for their afflicted souls, and who still continue to groan under a galling yoke, or an oppressive burden, of which they can by no means rid themselves; nay, whose

¹ Rev. Alexander Knox.

heavy weight they are as utterly powerless to lighten.

We need scarcely remind you, beloved hearers, that our Lord here addresses Himself to those who have, to some extent at least, become conscious of the fearful load of personal guilt that is resting upon them, and whose every attempt to cast it from them, or even to ease the oppressiveness of the burden, has only ended in bitter disappointment, and in more intense and poignant grief and suffering. It should, however, also be borne in mind that this is the only class to whom the invitation of the text is addressed.

The Bible affirms of all unregenerate men, that they are guilty before God, and that they are exposed to His wrath. But multitudes either make a mock at sin, or vainly imagine that no burden is resting upon them; while there is another class, who are painfully conscious of their sad condition, though ignorant as to the means of relief.

Not that these last are in reality greater sinners than other men. Indeed this is not even a question of comparative degrees of guilt. The question is simply whether or no the sinner is ready to make a straightforward, an honest, and a frank confession of the real facts in his case. King David did not all of a sudden become a great sinner when, after that stern rebuke of the prophet Nathan, "Thou

art the man!" (II. Sam. XII:7), He uttered the penitential Psalm of the ages. His soul was no less blood-stained while, a moment before, with seemingly righteous indignation, he presumed to pronounce sentence of condemnation upon the rich man, who had stolen the one little ewe lamb of his poor neighbor.

In fact a sinner can hardly be in a more perilous position than to suppose that he is good enough as he is. There were many such when Christ was here among men, who could boast of their morality, their good deeds, their conformity to the outward forms of religion: yet He, Who knew what was in their hearts, so thoroughly exposed their folly, hypocrisy, and wickedness, that the very term Pharisee, which was then pre-eminently a title of respectability, of honor, and of piety, has come to signify all that is base and loathsome in the sight of God and man!

The name, Pharisee, is indeed no longer claimed by the proud and self-righteous: but, alas! the spirit of the Pharisees of old still lives. Men still boast of their honesty, their sincerity, their deeds of charity, as though these things would surely open to them the gates of the heavenly Jerusalem! How securely many rest in the fact that they were baptized in infancy, even though during their whole lives they have practically denied Him, to Whose service their

parents consecrated them! Or how they glory in having been dipped in some flowing stream, wholly ignorant meanwhile of this other fact, that not all the waters of the Atlantic Ocean can wash away their guilt, when there is neither repentance toward God, nor faith upon the Lord Jesus Christ! Alas! alas! that such multitudes should pride themselves in "a form of godliness" (II. Tim. III:5), while utterly destitute of its transforming and sanctifying power! Or, if such people have no connection whatever with the visible Church, how ready are they then to console themselves with the thought, "I am just as good as these church members." Well, Heaven have mercy on you, if you are no better than lots of them! But God tells us in regard to all such, whether they are in the church, or outside of its pale, though they may say to themselves, "I am rich, and have gotten riches, and have need of nothing"; that they are in very deed "wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked" (Rev. III:17).

My dear hearer! do you belong to any one of these classes? Alas! if you do, then this gracious invitation of our adorable Redeemer is not addressed to you. If you are well, then you have no need of a physician. But, oh! if still out of Christ, then you are not well! You are a poor, sin-sick soul!

You do need salvation! You need to be saved from yourself! And your persistent denial of the truth, as to your sad moral and spiritual condition, does not, cannot do away with the appalling fact that you are a sinner before God, deservedly doomed to everlasting woe, from which naught save the blood and intercession of the Lord Jesus Christ can save you!

We are not discussing a question of mere probabilities. As God's word is true, aye, as your own prayerless, thankless life proves, you are verily guilty before God. A fearful burden is resting upon you, and the danger is imminent that it will sink your poor soul into perdition! Oh! why so blind? Why will you not acknowledge that God is true, and that without His pardoning and saving mercy you are undone for ever?

"Sinners Jesus came to call," and if you are not ready to acknowledge yourself as such, then you can have neither part nor lot in His salvation. You must then be your own advocate in that day of awful solemnity, "when God shall judge the secrets of men, according to" our "Gospel, by Jesus Christ" (Rom. II:16), and when He "will make justice the line, and righteousness the plummet; and" when "the hail shall sweep away the refuge of lies, and the waters shall overflow the hiding-place" (Is. XXVIII:17).

But we appeal to your conscience before God, is it true, my hearer, however much you may seek to hide it from others, and even from yourself; is it true that you feel no burden resting upon you? Are you altogether free from a sense of guilt? Do you never have any fearful apprehensions whatever, as you look death and the judgment in the face? Ah! you scarce dare think of these things! And yet you have never humbled yourself before your Maker, or implored His pardoning mercy in Jesus Christ! Oh! if such is really your condition, may a merciful God open your eyes before your steps take hold on hell!

But if, as we trust, your conscience has been troubling you; if the truth has at all shaken you out of the listlessness of your self-confidence; if the Spirit of God has even begun to strive with you; if only that awful lethargy, which so often foretokens the death eternal, has been disturbed and broken; then we pray God that you may find no peace or rest till you find them in Jesus; then we have blessed tidings for you to-day, for these gracious words of the Master are for just such tempest-tossed souls as yours.

“As an eagle that stirreth up her nest,
That fluttereth over her young,
He spread abroad His wings, He took them,
He bare them on His pinions” Deut. XXXII:11).

As Jehovah thus dealt with Israel of old, so He even yet often stirs up the nest of pride and self-righteousness, in which the deluded sinner reclines at his ease, tosses him out upon the stormy billows of doubt and dismay; and then, when the poor soul cries out, "I am a wretch undone! I shall surely perish!" even then, in His infinite mercy,

"He spreads abroad His wings, takes him,
Bears him on His pinions."

O! ye burdened and weary ones, hear the voice of Jesus, as He says to each one of you to-day, "Come unto Me, . . . and I will give you rest."

Do not try, my dying hearer, to carry that heavy burden alone. Why labor, why strive, why weary and distress yourself any longer, in vainly seeking to rid yourself of the oppressive load? You have yourself largely to blame for it. And every day and every hour that you continue to reject the mercy of God in Christ, you are making matters worse and worse.

The Lord Jesus, in His wondrous compassion and love, has come to you by His word and Spirit, and has simply made you conscious of your guilt, of the fact that a burden is resting upon you. And you, with your eyes but half opened as yet, like the man in the Gospel who at first saw men "as trees, walk-

ing" (Mark VIII:24), you blame Him, or, it may be, the servant whom He has employed in this thing, for the unrest and the anxiety that trouble you. But, dear hearer, may your eyes but be fully opened, and how you will bless God that your guilty peace was disturbed betimes! Yes! our Lord does use the moral law, even as the oriental plowman uses the sharp pointed ox-goad, that He may drive men out of their self-righteous nests and fastnesses; shows them their moral and spiritual deformity in the sight of God; and then He shows them yet again those pierced hands and that bleeding side, which, in the days of their carnal security, they had despised and treated with scorn, and once more He says to them, —All this I bore for your sake; give Me your loving service, and all that I possess shall be yours.

"Come unto Me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart; and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For My yoke is easy, and My burden is light."

Oh! you who for these weeks, or months, or years past, have sought and striven, and have sought and striven in vain, to get rid of the heavy burden of your sins, with what gladness and joy should you accept this most loving invitation. Here is a

promise of rest for you, and it meets your case exactly. Christ does not simply consent to bear little burdens; no! the greater your burden with the greater confidence may you come to Him.

But perhaps you are saying, How will Christ give me rest, when He commands me to take His yoke upon my weary shoulders? The yoke that I have thus far been compelled to wear is heavy and galling. What I now need is not another yoke, but entire freedom and rest. All this, in the highest and best sense, is what the Savior designs, and what He will assuredly accomplish for all who come to Him; for he, whom the Son makes free, "shall be free indeed" (John III:36), yea, eternally free! But no one of us is ready for such absolute liberty in this present imperfect state. Of this, however, He assures you; the yoke which He bids you take upon you is easy, and it is but a light burden which He bids you carry. Says an old writer, "It is difficult, and yet not difficult, to be a Christian. Only be in earnest, and take not up the Gospel as a *trivial* thing, but upon *both thy shoulders*. Make not light of thy load for Christ, and Christ will make it light for thee." And here remember two things. First, that a yoke is designed to help one to do his work, not to be a hindrance to it. Secondly, that the Savior says, "My yoke," which implies fellowship in toil,

and that He will bear the heavy end of it Himself.

Consider again Who it is that extends this gracious and loving invitation. These are not the words of a mere man. What folly and presumption it would be for any mere creature, even though he were an angel or an archangel, to extend such an invitation as this of our text. Says the psalmist,

“Cast thy burden upon Jehovah, and He will sustain thee:

He will never suffer the righteous to be moved.”
(Ps. LV:22.)

And again,

“I acknowledged my sin unto Thee,

And mine iniquity did I not hide:

I said, I will confess my transgressions unto Jehovah;

And Thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin.

Thou art my hiding place; Thou wilt preserve me from trouble;

Thou wilt compass me about with songs of deliverance. Selah!” (Ps. XXXII:5, 7.)

Ah! this is the call of the God-Man, Jehovah-Jesus! Why, the very fact that the holy Jesus has extended such an invitation to all the burdened and weary of earth, would alone suffice to prove His almighty power and Godhead.

Nor must we forget that—to quote the language of the Rev. Dr. William Hanna—“This invitation loses half its meaning, taken out of the connection in which it was spoken. We understand and appreciate its significance only by looking upon it as grounded on and flowing out of what Christ had the moment before been saying, ‘All things have been delivered unto Me of My Father’ (v. 27). Simply that they might so freely, fully come unto us, He has all, holds all as the Treasurer of the kingdom, the Steward of the divine mercies. And He holds all under the condition that there shall be the freest, most gracious dispensing of all, that whosoever asks shall get, that no needy one shall ever come to Him and be sent unrelieved away.”

Say you, I am guilty and vile? Behold, He is “Jehovah our Righteousness” (Jer. XXIII:6).

He bids you, moreover, to come and learn of Him. Sin terrifies. Satan, when no longer able to quiet the sinner's fears, seeks to persuade him that God will not heed his cries for mercy. But the Gospel, my friend, is a message of glad tidings of great joy. It is true indeed that even this later portion of revealed truth contains some most terrible denunciations: but not one of these—what is true likewise of all Scripture—not one of these is directed against the truly penitent soul. God's wrath

awaits the stubborn rebel; not those who humble themselves before Him.

Burdened, weary, sin-sick souls, such Jesus came to call, and such He evermore delights to bless.

“Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart.” O for the trumpet-tongue of an angel, or archangel, that we might be able to set forth the full meaning of this astounding declaration! Did you hear it, sinner? O open wide your sluggish ears. Yes! fling wide open upon its rusty, creaking hinges the door of your heart, and listen while the Lord Jesus, Whose “name” is “called Wonderful, Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace” (Is. IX:6), stoops down from the throne of His glory, and says to you; to you, a creature of yesterday; to you, a worm of the dust; to you, a rebel against His righteous sway; “Come unto Me, . . . learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart.” And will you, dare you refuse to humble yourself, so that you may walk with Him, and that He may make you wise unto salvation?

A missionary, while on a preaching tour in India, stopped at a Buddhist temple, and the priests, old and young, gathered around him. He told them the “old, old story” of Jesus and His love, from beginning to end, and made everything so plain and

practical that they could not but understand it all, and then an old, decrepit priest got up and walked off, saying, "I won't have it—I won't have it. If I cannot save myself I am willing to go to hell!" And is this to be the awful, the appalling choice of any one of you, beloved hearers? When the Bible tells you so plainly, what your own sober reason cannot but reaffirm, that all your attempts to merit heaven are a delusion and a lie, are you going to make your bed in hell, rather than humble yourself to accept salvation as the free gift of God?

"Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart; and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For My yoke is easy, and My burden is light." Do you say that you are not fit for such lofty companionship?

"All the fitness He requireth
Is to feel your need of Him.
This He gives you;
'Tis the Spirit's rising beam!"

In the beautiful language of another we would ask thee, O sinner,

"Art thou weary, art thou languid,
Art thou sore distress?
'Come to Me'—saith One—'and, coming,
Be at rest!"

'Hath He marks to lead me to Him,
If He be my Guide?'
'In His feet and hands are wound-prints,
And His side.'

'Is there diadem, as Monarch,
That His brow adorns?'
'Yea, a crown, in very surety,
But of thorns!'

'If I find Him, if I follow,
What His guerdon here?'
'Many a sorrow, many a labor,
Many a tear.'

'If I still hold closely to Him,
What hath He at last?'
'Sorrow vanquished, labor ended,
Jordan passed!'

'If I ask Him to receive me,
Will He say me nay?'
'Not till earth and not till heaven
Pass away!'

'Finding, following, keeping, struggling,
Is He sure to bless?'
'Angels, Martyrs, Prophets, Virgins,
Answer, Yes!' " 2

² *St. Stephen the Sabaite*, 725-794 A.D. Freely translated from the original Greek by John Mason Neale, D.D.

Why, our blessed Redeemer did not even rest content with having made this gracious offer while on earth, and so He repeats it from heaven. "Behold," He says, "I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear My voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with Me" (Rev. III:20). And the very last page of revealed truth sends back the glad refrain, "And the Spirit and the bride say, Come! And he that heareth, let him say, Come! And he that is athirst, let him come: he that will," whosoever it be, though without feeling, though scarcely conscious of any hungering and thirsting in his soul after God and holiness, if he is but willing to accept of salvation as a free gift, "let him take the water of life freely!" (Rev. XXII:17).

A learned German theologian, Rudolph Ewald Stier, speaking of our text and the immediate context, says, "The whole of this comprehensive conclusion of the discourse is an inexhaustible text, which can never be preached out! *Who is it* that invites, beseeches, and calls? The eternal Son of the eternal Father, for us become the Son of Man. *Whom* does He call? All who will know themselves to be what they are, weary and heavy laden. What does He *promise* them? Refreshment and rest for their souls. What does He *require* as the

conditions? Nothing, absolutely nothing, but *coming*; and when they are come, and have already received His consolation, only the *abiding* with Him, *learning* of Him."

"In a little church at Newport, in the Isle of Wight, there is a beautiful marble monument, erected by Her Majesty," the late Queen Victoria. "It represents a young girl reclining with her head on an open Bible; and on the marble page you read the words, 'Come unto Me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.' It represents the young princess Elizabeth, who, during the wars of the Commonwealth, languished in Carisbrook Castle, and was found by her jailer lying dead on the floor, with her cheek upon the open page" of her Bible, "and just at this particular text." There, in her prison solitude and loneliness, she had found rest in the bosom of her Savior. And that same loving Savior is ready to bless even you, my hearer. O! come to Jesus! and come just now! Come just as you are, with the whole burden of your guilt and shame, and He will cast over you the mantle of infinite charity, and clothe you in the garb of His perfect righteousness. Come with this only plea, that His blood was shed for you. Come! and with a glad heart you will be able to exclaim with the Rev. Horatius Bonar:

"I lay my sins on Jesus,
The spotless Lamb of God;
He bears them all, and frees us
From the accursèd load.
I bring my guilt to Jesus,
To wash my crimson stains
White, in His blood most precious,
Till not a spot remains.

I lay my wants on Jesus;
All fulness dwells in Him;
He heals all my diseases,
He doth my soul redeem:
I lay my griefs on Jesus,
My burdens and my cares;
He from them all releases,
He all my sorrows shares.

I rest my soul on Jesus,
This weary soul of mine;
His right hand me embraces,
I on His breast recline.
I love the Name of Jesus,
Emmanuel, Christ, the Lord;
Like fragrance on the breezes
His Name abroad is poured.

I long to be like Jesus,
Meek, loving, lowly, mild;
I long to be like Jesus,
The Father's holy Child:
I long to be with Jesus
Amid the heavenly throng,
To sing with saints His praises,
To learn the angels' song."

THE APPROACHING DAY

Heb. X:25. *"And so much the more, as ye see the day drawing nigh."*

“THE prayer-meeting is an institution of the past.” That was the declaration, at a meeting of evangelical ministers, of the pastor of an Eastern church of over two thousand communicants. Twenty odd years before, when not much more than half as large, that church had hundreds at its mid-week devotional gatherings. But times have changed, so that, a few years ago, a friend of ours found only about thirty-five in attendance. In the earlier days there were plenty of men ready to take part; now, as is true of many another congregation, the pastor has to take up pretty much the whole hour with a lecture. The Methodist Episcopal Church used to require, of all its members, attendance at the class-meeting: but the General Conference long since changed the Discipline, to suit the demands of the times, i.e., the growing worldly spirit of the age. Yes, alas! the pastor was right. So far as the mass of the members of our so-called

Protestant churches are concerned, the prayer-meeting has indeed become "an institution of the past." But let us not lose sight of the fact that, wherever that is the case, genuine revivals of religion have likewise necessarily become "an institution of the past." The newly inducted pastor of a Congregational church in Illinois was taken greatly by surprise one evening. "Will Mr. So-and-So please lead in prayer? But instead of the man, it was his wife who rose to her feet and led in prayer, her husband at the time being still unconverted. The man's early Scotch training, however, stayed by him, and so he always went with his Christian wife, not only to church, but to the prayer-meeting as well. It is almost needless to add, that he afterwards became a consistent disciple of our Lord. But the pastor evidently did not suppose that a man, who was not a Christian, would ever show himself in the prayer-meeting, unless something very unusual was going on.

Although in these terrible times in which we live, there has doubtless been, in very many cases, a decided change for the better, yet it is to be feared that in a great many homes there is no family altar, and that not even a blessing is asked at the table, unless the minister happens to be present, to discharge the duty that properly devolves upon the

head of the household. And when so many homes are almost prayerless, how can we expect a different state of things in our churches? Nevertheless the infallible Word of God solemnly warns us, in the very verse from which the text is taken, not to follow in the wake of the thoughtless multitude. "Not forsaking our own assembling together, as the custom of some is, but exhorting one another." And the special reason which the Holy Spirit here gives us, why we should be faithful and diligent in this matter, is thus set forth in the words of the text, "And so much the more, as ye see the day drawing nigh."

In order to be able to appreciate somewhat, the urgency with which this solemn exhortation comes to us, it is of the first importance that we inquire as to the import of the "day" here spoken of, and as to how we may "see" it "drawing nigh."

In speaking of coming events both Old and New Testament writers frequently make use of the term "day." "A day of Jehovah of hosts" (Is. II:12). "The day of vengeance of our God" (Is. LXI:2). "The day cometh, it burneth as a furnace" (Mal. IV:1). "The last day" (John VI:39, 40). "The day of wrath" (Rom. II:5). "The day of salvation" (II. Cor. VI:2). "The day of judgment" (II. Pet. III:7). "The day of God" (v. 12).

And now does the immediate context give us any clue, as to what "day" is particularly referred to in our text? At verses 12 and 13 of this tenth chapter, we read concerning the Lord Jesus Christ, our great High Priest, "But He, when He had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God; henceforth expecting till His enemies be made the footstool of His feet." In verses 26 to 31, immediately following upon the words of the text, the certain and awful doom is foretold of him "who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith He was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace," concluding with these words of solemn import, "For we know Him that said, Vengeance belongeth unto Me, I will recompense. And again, The Lord shall judge His people. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God." To which must be added verses 36 and 37. "For ye have need of patience, that, having done the will of God, ye may receive the promise.

For yet a very little while,

He that cometh shall come, and shall not tarry."

But the apostle, when he wrote this letter to the Hebrew Christians, did not divide it into chapters and verses; he wrote as any one else would write

a letter, and to be fully understood it should be read right through from beginning to end. And so we may well look through the whole of it for a definite answer to our query.

The epistle begins, as you are aware, by setting forth the infinite superiority of our Lord over the angelic hosts. Right after this, at the beginning of chapter two, he declares the utter impossibility of escape of the neglecter of "so great a salvation" (v. 3), now that it has been proclaimed by the Lord Himself personally, with the added confirmation of God the Father, and of the Holy Spirit.

Upon this follows the statement, in verse 5, that God has not put "the world to come," namely this earth, as it shall yet be inhabited by teeming, happy multitudes, during the coming millennial era, "subject unto angels." Contrarywise, he asserts, in the verses that immediately follow, that God has put absolutely "all things in subjection under" the Savior's "feet." And so, were there time, one might go through the whole of this truly wonderful epistle, which is so full of the past and yet future achievements of our adorable Redeemer, "The Apostle and High Priest of our confession" (Ch. III:1). We can, however, stop only to note two other passages.

At chapter IX:27-28, i.e., right after the state-

ment that our Lord "now once at the end of the ages hath . . . been manifested to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself," it is added, "And inasmuch as it is appointed unto men once to die, and after this cometh judgment; so Christ also, having been once offered to bear the sins of many, shall appear a second time, apart from sin," that is, without a sin-offering, "unto salvation."

In chapter two, from which we have already quoted, it is plainly intimated, what Scripture elsewhere so fully affirms, namely, that the redeemed are to be partakers with Christ in His coming dominion and glory, and that all others will be rigidly excluded from participation in their blessedness. And so we read in chapter XII:28-29, "Wherefore, receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us have grace, whereby," or, as in the margin to the old Version, "let us hold fast," in order that "we may offer service well-pleasing to God with reverence and awe: for our God is a consuming fire."

We are thus inevitably brought to the conclusion that the "day" mentioned in the text must, in some way or other, refer to our Lord's future advent in glory, and to His coming millennial reign. And with this conclusion accords the entire New Testament, from the beginning of the Gospel according to Matthew, to the very close of the Revelation

given to the beloved disciple "in the isle that is called Patmos." Indeed the word "day," in these inspired writings, when applied to future events, almost invariably refers to the coming again, and the beatific reign, of Him Who shall yet be crowned "KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS" (Rev. XIX:16).

His coming again is expressly spoken of as His "day," as in I. Cor. I:7-8, "So that ye come behind in no gift; waiting for the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ; Who shall also confirm you unto the end, that ye be unreprouvable in *the day* of our Lord Jesus Christ." In chapter V:5, "That the spirit may be saved in *the day* of the Lord Jesus." In II. Cor. I:14, "As also ye did acknowledge us in part, that we are your glorying, even as ye also are ours, in *the day* of our Lord Jesus." In Phil. I:6, "Being confident of this very thing, that He Who began a good work in you, will perfect it until *the day* of Jesus Christ." And in verse 10, "So that ye may approve the things that are excellent; that ye may be sincere and void of offence *unto the day* of Christ." In II. Thess. II:2, "To the end that ye be not quickly shaken from your mind, nor yet be troubled, . . . as that *the day* of the Lord is just at hand." The Greek verb here used *ἐνέστηκεν*, it should be observed, is altogether different in

meaning from ἤγγικεν found in Matt. III:2, and IV:17, which means that the kingdom of heaven might come very soon, or be deferred for centuries to come. In Phil. II:15-16 we read, "That ye may become blameless and harmless, children of God without blemish, in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom ye are seen as lights in the world, holding forth the word of life; that I may have whereof to glory in *the day* of Christ, that I did not run in vain, neither labored in vain."

To such as had but lately been converted to God from the darkness, the superstition, and the abominable idolatry of heathenism, the apostle writes, in I. Thess. I:8-10, "For from you hath sounded forth the word of the Lord, not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but in every place your faith to Godward is gone forth; so that we need not to speak anything. For they themselves report concerning us what manner of entering in we had unto you; and how ye turned unto God from idols, to serve a living and true God; *and to wait for His Son from heaven*, Whom He raised from the dead," i.e., from among the dead, "even Jesus, Who delivereth us from the wrath to come."

With our sadly perverted and wholly unscriptural notions about this much-vaunted, but utterly

unreal, moral and spiritual progress of the race, and as to this so-called modern civilization and enlightenment, we have almost wholly lost sight of the fact, that the object of the present Gospel dispensation, as here set forth by the great apostle of the Gentiles, is just two-fold, viz., to turn men from the worship of dumb idols unto "a living and true God," and that they may turn their hearts and their eyes longingly toward heaven, for the return of the ascended Redeemer, i.e., "to wait for His Son from heaven."

So thoroughly were the early disciples, Gentiles as well as Jews, instructed in regard to all this; so well did they understand that it was at the revelation, the coming again in power and great glory, of the Savior Whom they had learned to love and adore, that all their brightest hopes were to be realized, that the apostolic writers often refer to our Lord's second coming, without even mentioning His name; simply referring to that blessed and glorious event, and all its attendant scenes of surpassing grandeur and glory, as "The day of redemption," "That day," or simply, "The day." So we read in Eph. IV:30, "And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, in Whom ye were sealed unto the day of redemption." It is to this "day of redemption" that the apostle refers, in that wonderful out-

burst of sacred eloquence, in Rom. VIII:18-25, where he exclaims, "For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed to usward." And then he tells us that the whole nether creation, which "groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now," as well as we ourselves, "who have the first-fruits of the Spirit," "itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption, into the liberty of the glory of the children of God." And it is expressly declared, in verse 23, that the redemption here spoken of, is not simply that of the soul, or spirit, which indeed is redeemed the moment the sinner turns to God in Christ, but "the redemption of our body," which can mean nothing less, and nothing else, than the bodily resurrection of the saints, when they shall appear perfect and glorified, in body, soul, and spirit, and worthy of full "adoption" (v. 15), and formal introduction, as children into the family of God!

But to proceed. In many other places Holy Writ evidently refers to the day of Christ, the day of our redemption, in an offhand, matter-of-fact way, which takes for granted that those who are addressed are perfectly familiar with the subject, e.g., II. Tim. I:12, "For which cause I suffer also these things: yet I am not ashamed; for I know

Him Whom I have believed, and I am persuaded that He is able to guard that which I have committed unto Him *against that day*." In verse 18, "The Lord grant unto him to find mercy of the Lord in *that day*." Ch. IV:8, "Henceforth there is laid up for me," kept in store, "the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give to me *at that day*; and not to me only, but also to all them that have loved His appearing." In II. Thess. I:7-8, it is declared that "the Lord Jesus" shall be revealed "from heaven with the angels of His power in flaming fire, rendering vengeance to them that know not God, and to them that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus"; "when," as we are told in verse 10, "He shall come to be glorified in His saints, and to be marvelled at in all them that believed . . . in *that day*." Rom. XIII:11-12, "And this, knowing the season, that already it is time for you to awake out of sleep: for now is salvation nearer to us," that is, its completion in the bliss and glory of the resurrection morning, "for now is salvation nearer to us than when we first believed," namely, when first we gave ourselves to Christ. "The night is far spent, and *the day* is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light."

In John VI:39, 40, 44, and 54 our Lord reiterates the promise of a glorious resurrection "at" or "in the *last day*." We quote verse 54, "He that eateth My flesh, and drinketh My blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up *at the last day*." In Acts II:20 that coming day of wonders is spoken of after this manner,

"The sun shall be turned into darkness,
And the moon into blood,
Before *the day* of the Lord come,
That great and notable *day*."

"And so much the more, as ye see *the day* drawing nigh." Surely we are not left in uncertainty as to what *day* is here referred to. Of one thing, however, we know absolutely nothing at all. "But *of that day and hour* knoweth no one, not even the angels of heaven, neither the Son, but the Father only" (Matt. XXIV:36). And at the close of the parable of the virgins our Lord adds the solemn admonition, "Watch therefore, for ye know not *the day nor the hour*" (Matt. XXV:13).

"Not forsaking our own assembling together, as the custom of some is, but exhorting one another; and so much the more, as ye see *the day* drawing nigh."

Some one has given eleven excellent scriptural

reasons for attending the weekly prayer-meeting: but, strange to say, the reason here given us by the Holy Spirit was entirely lost sight of. And yet surely, my brethren, we can "*see the day drawing nigh.*" It does indeed seem that this is the very "last hour of the world's Saturday night." While we should beware that we do not undertake to set the exact time of the Lord's return, yet it is both our solemn duty, and our privilege as well, to try to "discern the signs of the times" (Matt. XVI:3), for our Lord of old rebuked the unbelieving Jews for failing to do that very thing. And these "signs of the times" are to be seen everywhere about us. Matt. XXIV:5-14. "For many shall come in My name, saying, I am the Christ; and shall lead many astray. And ye shall hear of wars and rumors of wars; see that ye be not troubled: for these things must needs come to pass; but the end is not yet. For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom; and there shall be famines and earthquakes in divers places. But all these things are the beginning of travail. Then shall they deliver you up unto tribulation, and shall kill you; and ye shall be hated of all the nations for My name's sake. And then shall many stumble, and shall deliver up one another, and shall hate one another. And many false prophets shall arise, and shall lead

many astray. And because iniquity shall be multiplied, the love of the many shall wax cold. But he that endureth to the end, the same shall be saved. And this Gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole world for a testimony unto all the nations; and then shall the end come." Let this be distinctly understood. Neither here, in Matt. XXIV:14, nor elsewhere, does our Lord ever say a word as to *THE end of the world*. As you will find in the margin to Matt. XXVIII:20, the only proper translation of that phrase is, "The consummation of the age." He ever and always speaks of the end of the present dispensation, or economy, of Divine grace, which began with His first coming, when the Mosaic dispensation ended, and will itself come to an end when He returns in glory to inaugurate His millennial kingdom. Luke XXI:9, 25-26. "And when ye shall hear of wars and tumults, be not terrified: for these things must needs come to pass first; but the end is not immediately. . . . And there shall be signs in sun and moon and stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, in perplexity for the roaring of the sea and the billows; men fainting for fear, and for expectation of the things which are coming on the world: for the powers of the heavens shall be shaken." II. Tim. III:1-5. "But know this, that in the last days grievous times

shall come. For men shall be lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, haughty, railers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, implacable, slanderers, without self-control, fierce, no lovers of good, traitors, headstrong, puffed up, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God; holding a form of godliness, but having denied the power thereof." Verses 12-13. "Yea, and all that would live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution. But evil men and impostors shall wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived." II. Pet. III:3-4. "Knowing this first, that in the *last days* mockers shall come with mockery, walking after their own lusts, and saying, Where is the promise of His coming? for, from the day that the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation."

Are you still out of Christ? O turn to Him, while yet it is a day of grace! To-morrow it may be too late!

Fellow-Christians, listen to the comforting, the blessed assurance of our adorable Redeemer. "But when these things begin to come to pass, look up, and lift up your heads; because your redemption draweth nigh" (Luke XXI:28). Oh! let us not be discouraged, however dark the world about us may be. We serve an almighty Savior, and He will

yet ride forth gloriously, conquering and to conquer.

This is a sad, and yet also a glorious era, for it is the harbinger of the coming of the King of day, at Whose appearing the gloom and the darkness of earth, its ignorance and its superstition, its folly and its crime, shall for ever pass away, and when "all the earth shall be filled with the glory of Jehovah" (Num. XIV:21). This is "the day of His preparation" (Nah. II:3). The railroad, the steamboat, the electric car, the telegraph, the telephone, the automobile, the aeroplane, the thousand and one inventions and discoveries of these latter days, show us what a paradisiacal state this world will be in, when once Satan and his accursed hordes have been cast out, and when the nations "shall . . . learn war" no "more." And when "they shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig-tree; and none shall make them afraid: for the mouth of Jehovah of hosts hath spoken it" (Mic. IV:3-4).

And you and I, dear hearer, if we are faithful unto the end, are then to reign with Christ over the nations in the flesh! While the Bridegroom tarrieth, we are left here for yet a little season, to do what we may for the glory of God, and for the good of our fellow-men. Let us then be up and doing, "Redeeming the time, because the days are evil"

(Eph. V:16). "The Lord is at hand. In nothing be anxious; but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God" (Phil. IV:5-6). As says the poet:

"We are living, we are dwelling,
In a grand and awful time;
In an age on ages telling;
To be living is sublime!"

"But watch ye at every season, making supplication, that ye may prevail to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man" (Luke XXI:36). Beloved hearers, while yet the Lord delayeth His coming, let us this hour highly and solemnly resolve, that we will no longer treat our mid-week meeting for conference and prayer as though it were a matter of little concern, whether we or our children attend it or not. For little reason have we to expect that souls will continue to be converted under the preaching of the Word, and by all the means of grace that we here enjoy, if we turn our backs upon the prayer-meeting, which is in very deed the spiritual thermometer of the church; and which should ever be, for every congregation of believers, a joyous, blessed weekly family gathering of both old and young. In

many a church, where that is the case, they never, or scarce ever, have a communion season, without some one or more souls being added to them of "those that were saved" (Acts II:47). May God of His infinite mercy grant that from now on such may be the case among us, and then we'll have a revival the whole year round!

THE RESTORATION AND REDEMPTION OF ISRAEL

Ps. CII: 11-18.

*My days are like a shadow that declineth;
And I am withered like grass.
But Thou, O Jehovah, wilt abide for ever;
And Thy memorial name unto all generations.
Thou wilt arise, and have mercy upon Zion;
For it is time to have pity upon her,
Yea, the set time is come.
For Thy servants take pleasure in her stones,
And have pity upon her dust.
So the nations shall fear the name of Jehovah,
And all the kings of the earth Thy glory.
For Jehovah hath built up Zion;
He hath appeared in His glory.
He hath regarded the prayer of the destitute,
And hath not despised their prayer.
This shall be written for the generation to come;
And a people which shall be created shall praise
Jehovah."*

THAT notorious unbeliever, Frederick the Great of Prussia, once asked his pious chaplain for the evidence, in few words, of the truth of Christianity. The chaplain answered in one word:—"Sire, Israel."

Marvelous has been Israel's history. "And thou shalt answer and say before Jehovah thy God," that is, as the pious Israelite brought an offering of the first fruits of the ground unto Jehovah, "A Syrian ready to perish was my father; and he went down into Egypt, and sojourned there, few in number; and he became there a nation, great, mighty, and populous" (Deut. XXVI:5). Exclaimed that false-hearted prophet Balaam, when the Spirit of God compelled him to bless the nation whom he had been hired to curse,

"From Aram hath Balak brought me,
The king of Moab from the mountains of the
East:

Come, curse me Jacob,
And come, defy Israel.
How shall I curse, whom God hath not cursed?
And how shall I defy, whom Jehovah hath not
defied?

For from the top of the rocks I see him,
And from the hills I behold him:
Lo, it is a people that dwelleth alone,
And shall not be reckoned among the nations.
Who can count the dust of Jacob,
Or number the fourth part of Israel?
Let me die the death of the righteous,
And let my last end be like his!"

(Num. XXIII:7-10.)

Israel's very existence to this day is in itself the most wonderful corroboration of the Pentateuch, and indeed of all Scripture.

And yet very much depends upon our interpreting Scripture consistently.

Let it be said, first of all, that there is no warrant whatever for allegorizing such plain geographical terms as Judah, Ephraim, Gilead, Lebanon, the mountains of Israel, etc. The New Testament never allegorizes or spiritualizes a single one of them.

Said a Jew, "You Christians are willing enough to let us have the curses, but you want all the blessings yourselves." The charge was but too true, alas! And it is the very way too to countenance these infidel vagaries that the Bible does not mean just exactly what it says.

Let it be added right here that the whole argument against the plain, grammatical, and historical interpretation of prophecy is absolutely groundless. Why did the Jews allegorize Isaiah LIII? Had they accepted that wonderful chapter, and other like Scriptures, in their plain, obvious meaning, they would have been compelled to acknowledge that Jesus of Nazareth was indeed their Heaven-sent Messiah. Multitudes of Christian people seem just about as anxious to get rid of the blessed doctrine

of our Lord's ever imminent advent, and so they treat the prophecies that relate to His second coming in precisely the same way, e.g., Matt. XXIV:44, "Therefore be ye also ready; for in an hour that ye think not the Son of Man cometh." "Oh, that means when a person dies." No, it means nothing of the sort. Dan. VII:13-14 tells us about the coming of the Son of Man. "I saw in the night visions, and, behold, there came with the clouds of heaven one like unto a Son of Man, and He came even to the Ancient of Days, and they brought Him near before Him. And there was given Him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all the peoples, nations, and languages should serve Him: His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and His kingdom that which shall not be destroyed." In Matt. XXVI:63-64 we find our Lord's own interpretation of what He meant when He spoke about His coming as the Son of Man. Standing before the high court of the Jews, and to compel Him, as it were, to tell those unscrupulous Jewish rulers, who were vainly trying to find some pretext to put Him to an ignominious death, who He was, "the high priest" finally "said unto Him, I adjure Thee by the living God, that Thou tell us whether Thou art the Christ, the Son of God." Now mark our Lord's answer, in

which He not only admitted that He was the Son of God; but, moreover, by His direct reference to the prophecy of Daniel, which we have just quoted, gave them, as they well understood, what would one day be proof positive to all the world, that He was indeed the Christ of God. "Jesus saith unto him, Thou hast said: nevertheless I say unto you, Henceforth ye shall see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of Power, and coming on the clouds of heaven." "The Son of Man came," first of all, "to give His life a ransom for many" (Matt. XX:28). Where is there the slightest proof, from Holy Writ, that He has been journeying to and fro between this earth and the highest heavens during all these centuries, to convoy the spirits of believers from earth to the realms of bliss? Oh, no, that is the work of His angelic messengers, even as of old they carried the beggar Lazarus, when he died, "into Abraham's bosom" (Luke XVI:22). He Himself has been sitting meanwhile "on the right hand of God" the Father Almighty, "henceforth expecting till His enemies be made the footstool of His feet" (Heb. X:12, 13); and then, and not until then, shall He "appear *a second time*, apart from sin," that is, without a sin-offering, "to them that wait for Him, unto salvation" (Ch. IX:28).

Providence has in our day again utterly upset

many of these fine-spun theories. What has become of our peace societies and schemes of arbitration, conceived often from the noblest of motives? Just think of the two Peace Conferences, held at The Hague in 1899 and in 1907, and, by way of contrast, of the present state of Europe and of the world at large. It isn't so many years ago that we were all horrified by the tales of woe that reached us from far off Armenia; when not one of the Great Powers of Europe seemingly dared to attempt to put an effectual stop to the outrageous acts of the unspeakable Turk. And since the outbreak of the great war, now at last brought to a sudden close, the world has stood aghast at the way in which the present Turkish government—with the evident consent of Germany, if indeed the infamous Kaiser and his accursed military satellites did not set them on—how it set deliberately at work to exterminate both the Armenians and the Syrians. What, alas! has been going on in the world since that first famous Conference at The Hague ended its deliberations? For these past four years and more the great nations of Europe, and latterly even our own beloved Republic, and pretty nearly all the rest of mankind, have been engaged in a life and death struggle between the spirit of Democracy, and one of the most ruthless and demoniac attempts the

world has ever witnessed to throttle the liberties of mankind. Let us devoutly thank God that this awful agony is at an end! But no one knows as yet what will be the final outcome of it all. Ah! it is vain, dear hearers, to look for abiding peace on the earth, until Satan and his wicked hordes shall have been banished from the abodes of men, when "The kingdom of the world" shall have "become the kingdom of our Lord, and of His Christ; and He shall reign for ever and ever," i.e., as in the Greek, "unto the ages of the ages" (Rev. XI:15).

If we are not to be all at sea in regard to the things that are coming upon the earth, then we must learn to interpret prophecy by the very same rules that everybody applies to all other parts of Scripture, or to any other writing.

And no one can possibly gain an intelligent understanding of the future history of our race, and of this globe, who presumes to leave the descendants of God's ancient covenant people out of the account. But in considering the future destiny of the Hebrew nation, we must by no means lose sight of the definite and sweeping terms of the Abrahamic covenant. It included both temporal and spiritual blessings for the patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and for their lineal descendants to the remotest generation, just as well, or rather, far more

expressly than spiritual blessings for the Gentile nations. These latter were indeed included, and very definitely too; still they were, and are to this day, not primary, but secondary. "Salvation is from the Jews" (John IV:22). "Who are Israelites; whose is the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises; whose are the fathers, and of whom is Christ as concerning the flesh, Who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen" (Rom. IX:4-5). "Know therefore that they that are of faith, the same are sons of Abraham. And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the Gospel beforehand unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all the nations be blessed. So then they that are of faith are blessed with the faithful Abraham. . . . That upon the Gentiles might come the blessing of Abraham in Christ Jesus; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith. . . . And if ye are Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, heirs according to promise" (Gal. III:7-9, 14, 29).

What now are some of the predictions of Holy Writ in regard to this chosen people of God? While the earth abides Israel can never cease to exist as a distinct people. "Shall not be reckoned among the nations" (Num. XXIII:9). "Therefore fear

thou not, O Jacob My servant, saith Jehovah; neither be dismayed, O Israel: for, lo, I will save thee from afar, and thy seed from the land of their captivity; and Jacob shall return, and shall be quiet and at ease, and none shall make him afraid. For I am with thee, saith Jehovah, to save thee: for I will make a full end of all the nations whither I have scattered thee, but I will not make a full end of thee; but I will correct thee in measure, and will in no wise leave thee unpunished" (Jer. XXX:10-11). All of this is repeated in Ch. XLVI:27-28. "Behold, the eyes of the Lord Jehovah are upon the sinful kingdom, and I will destroy it from off the face of the earth; save that I will not utterly destroy the house of Jacob, saith Jehovah. For, lo, I will command, and I will sift the house of Israel among all the nations, like as grain is sifted in a sieve, yet shall not the least kernel fall upon the earth. . . . And I will bring back the captivity of My people Israel, and they shall build the waste cities, and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, and drink the wine thereof; they shall also make gardens, and eat the fruit of them. And I will plant them upon their land, and they shall no more be plucked up out of their land which I have given them, saith Jehovah thy God" (Amos IX:8-9, 14-15). It is as a separate nation that Israel

shall yet again possess the land of their fathers. "Therefore say, Thus saith the Lord Jehovah: Whereas I have removed them far off among the nations, and whereas I have scattered them among the countries, yet will I be to them a sanctuary for a little while in the countries whither they are come. Therefore say, Thus saith the Lord Jehovah: I will gather you from the peoples, and assemble you out of the countries where ye have been scattered, and I will give you the land of Israel" (Eze. XI:16-17).

This is to be an altogether different return from that from Babylon under Zerubbabel and the high priest Joshua, and those that followed in after years with Ezra the scribe and Nehemiah the governor, for then they shall come, not from any one particular city or country, but from all the ends of the earth. The present Zionist movement is doubtless designed to be preparatory to the great consummation, though far from being any part of the final and triumphant ingathering of Israel; for they are now going back in their unbelief and impenitence, whereas in the end they will return with renewed hearts and in the triumph of faith. "And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord will set His hand again the second time to recover the remnant of His people, that shall remain, from Assyria,

and from Egypt, and from Pathros, and from Cush, and from Elam, and from Shinar, and from Hamath, and from the islands of the sea. And He will set up an ensign for the nations, and will assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth. . . . And Jehovah will utterly destroy the tongue of the Egyptian sea; and with His scorching wind will He wave His hand over the River," i.e., the Euphrates, "and will smite it into seven streams, and cause men to march over dryshod. And there shall be a highway for the remnant of His people, that shall remain, from Assyria; like as there was for Israel in the day that he came up out of the land of Egypt" (Is. XI:11-12, 15-16). "And they shall come thither, and they shall take away all the detestable things thereof and all the abominations thereof from thence. And I will give them one heart, and I will put a new spirit within you; and I will take the stony heart out of their flesh, and will give them a heart of flesh; that they may walk in My statutes, and keep Mine ordinances, and do them: and they shall be My people, and I will be their God" (Eze. XI:18-20). "And in that day thou shalt say, I will give thanks unto Thee, O Jehovah; for though Thou wast angry with me, Thine anger is turned away, and Thou comfortest me.

Behold, God is my salvation; I will trust, and will not be afraid: for Jehovah, even Jehovah, is my strength and song; and He is become my salvation" (Is. XII:1-2). As appears from Isaiah XI, quoted above, Israel's final return to the land of promise will be no less miraculous than their deliverance from Egyptian bondage.

But something else is going to happen, even in connection with this prospective preliminary and partial return, which will be like to their going up out of the land of Egypt. When God commanded Moses, at the burning bush, to go and deliver His people, He said to him, "And I will give this people favor in the sight of the Egyptians: and it shall come to pass, that, *when ye go, ye shall not go empty*: but every woman shall ask of her neighbor, and of her that sojourneth in her house, jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, and raiment: and ye shall put them upon your sons, and upon your daughters; and ye shall despoil the Egyptians" (Ex. III:21-22). They did not "borrow," as the old English version has it; but, as God commanded them to do, "They asked of the Egyptians jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, and raiment: and Jehovah gave the people favor in the sight of the Egyptians, so that they let them have what they asked. And they despoiled the Egyptians" (Ex. XII:35-

36). For generations the Jewish people were trampled upon, pillaged, and brutally slaughtered almost everywhere the wide world over. During the past century, however, they have in many countries enjoyed comparative immunity from wanton insult and injury, and of late they are largely amassing the wealth of the nations. When once a goodly portion of them are fairly settled in Palestine, they will soon become immensely wealthy, so that, when the Antichrist appears, it will only be a matter of a few years before he fixes his evil eye on them, and when he will gather the nations against them, "to take the prey, to carry away silver and gold, to take away cattle and goods, to take great spoil" (Eze. XXXVIII:13).

Now, as the time of Israel's redemption is manifestly drawing nigh, God is, in His overruling providence, stirring up the hearts of His ancient covenant people with an intense longing for the land of their fathers. The editor of a Jewish journal published in England, though personally opposed to the return of his people to Palestine, yet frankly admitted, many years ago, that "You might as well try to stem the Atlantic Ocean," as to undertake to keep them from going back when once the way is fairly open. And millions of dollars are being raised by them, in this and other lands, to aid those who desire to go. Now

that the abominable Turk has at length been driven out, the Jews will soon be going there en masse. Many prosperous Jewish farming colonies were got under way before the outbreak of the late gigantic struggle, Hebrew schools of various grades were also started; and in the month of October, in this year of grace 1918, the corner-stone of the prospective Hebrew University of Jerusalem, was laid on the Mount of Olives, consisting of twelve stones, representing the twelve tribes of Israel, and the ancient Hebrew will soon again be the every-day spoken language of Palestine!

We are wont to talk of the ten "lost tribes"; but they were never altogether lost. After the secession of the ten tribes under Jeroboam, we learn that, at different times, there were many who gave up the inheritance of their fathers, and resorted to the house of David. This exodus began from the very start. "And the priests and the Levites that were in all Israel resorted to him," that is, to Rehoboam, "out of all their border. For the Levites left their suburbs and their possession, and came to Judah and Jerusalem: for Jeroboam and his sons cast them off, that they should not execute the priest's office unto Jehovah. . . . And after them, out of all the tribes of Israel, such as set their hearts to seek Jehovah, the God of Israel, came to Jerusalem to sac-

rifice unto Jehovah, the God of their fathers. So they strengthened the kingdom of Judah, and made Rehoboam the son of Solomon strong. . . . And he," i.e., Asa, king of Judah, "gathered all Judah and Benjamin, and them that sojourned with them out of Ephraim and Manasseh, and out of Simeon: for they fell to him out of Israel in abundance, when they saw that Jehovah his God was with him. . . . So they established a decree to make proclamation throughout all Israel, from Beersheba even to Dan, that they should come to keep the passover unto Jehovah, the God of Israel, at Jerusalem: for they had not kept it in great numbers in such sort as it is written. . . . So the posts" of king Hezekiah "passed from city to city through the country of Ephraim and Manasseh, even unto Zebulun: but they laughed them to scorn, and mocked them. Nevertheless certain men of Asher and Manasseh, and of Zebulun, humbled themselves, and came to Jerusalem. . . . For a multitude of the people, even many of Ephraim and Manasseh, Issachar and Zebulun, had not cleansed themselves, yet did they eat the passover otherwise than it is written. For Hezekiah had prayed for them, saying, The good Jehovah pardon every one that setteth his heart to seek God, Jehovah, the God of his fathers, though he be not cleansed according to the purification of

the sanctuary. And Jehovah hearkened to Hezekiah, and healed the people" (II. Chron. XI:13-14, 16-17; XV:9; XXX:5, 10-11, 18-20). And who was that aged widow, who, "coming up at that very hour," when the child Jesus was brought into the temple, "gave thanks unto God, and spake of Him to all them that were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem"? She "was Anna, a prophetess, the daughter of Phanuel, *of the tribe of Asher*" (Luke II:38, 36). Some years ago there were representatives of at least five tribes in the holy land. And they will all get there in God's own good time. In 1899 a remarkable delegate appeared at the Zionist Congress at Basle. He came from Russia, and was a representative of the Caucasian Jewish Kubans, inhabitants of the high Caucasian mountains, renowned for their great strength. They are terrible in war on horseback. The Cossacks are even afraid of these Jewish heroes. They do not know much of Judaism, only their hearts are Jewish. They believe that they belong to the ten tribes. Their love for Zion has not been extinguished during nearly three thousand years. They still want to go to the land of Israel. On the isle of Cyprus, in the Mediterranean Sea, to which the apostle Paul and his companions went from Antioch, in Syria, as they started on their first foreign missionary tour, which

island the Turkish government ceded to England in 1878, many Jews are waiting for a fair opportunity to go in and possess the land of promise. Tens of thousands had already gone back from different parts of Europe, and had formed settlements here and there, before this dreadful war suddenly brought matters to a halt.

For their last loan to the Turkish government the Rothschilds were reported at the time to have taken a mortgage on the whole of Palestine. We have all heard of the present Zionist movement, already referred to, which has aroused the enthusiasm, and engaged the active interest, of the orthodox Jews throughout the world. For a good many years an annual conference of these Zionists—Israelites who are endeavoring to regain possession of Palestine for their own people—has been held in Europe. Large gatherings have likewise been held in the city of Chicago, in Boston, and elsewhere, one of them with representatives from every State in the Union, many from Canada, and even a special delegate from South Africa. Our self-styled liberal, or modern, Jews, who have practically renounced the faith of their fathers, have been bitterly opposed to this movement. The United Hebrew Congregations of Richmond, Virginia, in December, 1899, declared themselves unalterably opposed to Zionism.

"The Jews," said they, "are not a nation; they are a religious community. America is our Zion." And their Cincinnati organ, *The American Israelite*, in its issue of August 10, 1899, contained the following editorial note, "The next, and we hope and almost believe, the last, Zionist Congress will meet in Basle, Switzerland, next Tuesday." But this work is evidently of God, and these modern Sadducees will find that, with all their opposition and ridicule, they "will not be able to overthrow" it (Acts V:39).

The Jews have often sought to regain possession of the holy city. The Roman emperor, Julian the Apostate, who reigned from 361 to 363 A.D., even ordered them to rebuild the temple: but, though backed up by the authority and power of the empire, the attempt miserably failed. Our Lord had declared that Jerusalem would "be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled" (Luke XXI:24). Julian thought that he could set aside and undo that prophetic declaration of the world's Redeemer, by helping the Jews to rebuild their temple; but fire leaped out of the ground, and compelled the workmen to desist.

"The times of the Gentiles" began with the overthrow of the Jewish State by Nebuchadnezzar, and they are to continue until Israel takes her Heaven-

appointed place as the leader of the nations, a position which God promised to that people, on condition of their absolute loyalty and obedience, when He entered into covenant with them at mount Sinai. "And Moses went up unto God, and Jehovah called unto him out of the mountain, saying, Thus shalt thou say to the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel: Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto Myself. Now therefore, if ye will obey My voice indeed, and keep My covenant, then ye shall be Mine own possession from among all peoples; for all the earth is Mine: and ye shall be unto Me a kingdom of priests, and a holy nation" (Ex. XIX:3-6). These "times" of Gentile dominion may soon come to an end. And if that be so, then Israel's wanderings are also about to come to an end.

It should be borne in mind, indeed, in this connection, that the present movement, like all previous attempts to regain possession of Jerusalem and of all the land of Canaan, is being undertaken in a spirit of unbelief; for these orthodox Jews are by no means ready to acknowledge our blessed Redeemer as their Lord and King. They are still looking for a Messiah Who has never yet appeared in the flesh. Nevertheless it is to a remnant of these returning

Jews, who are even now so steadfastly setting their faces Zionward, that our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ will yet show Himself, in the hour of their sore distress, for their deliverance and salvation. "For I say unto you, Ye shall not see Me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord" (Matt. XXIII:39). "And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplication; and they shall look upon Me Whom they have pierced; and they shall mourn for Him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for Him, as one that is in bitterness for his first-born. . . . Then shall Jehovah go forth, and fight against those nations, as when He fought in the day of battle. And His feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east; and the mount of Olives shall be cleft in the midst thereof toward the east and toward the west, and there shall be a very great valley, and half of the mountain shall remove toward the north, and half of it toward the south. And ye shall flee by the valley of My mountains; for the valley of the mountains shall reach unto Azel; yea, ye shall flee, like as ye fled from before the earthquake, in the days of Uzziah, king of Judah; and Jehovah my God shall come, and all the

holy ones with Thee" (Zech. XII:10; XIV:3-5).

And Israel's final and complete restoration, and the conversion of the world, need not be looked for until after all that has come to pass. See Is. II:1-4; Micah IV:1-4; Zech. XII and XIV; Rom. XI, etc.

There is yet another respect in which history will again repeat itself. Ancient Egypt at last became envious of Israel's growth, and so they afflicted the people with cruel bondage, and even tried to kill off their male infants. See Ex. I. So too will the nations envy Israel, when the people shall have become re-established in Palestine, as is clearly foretold in Joel III and Zech. XIV, but especially in Eze. XXXVIII. Surprising premonitions of all that we have had in recent years, in the bitter enmity against the Jews, that has shown itself in France and Germany, as well as in the appalling persecutions to which they have been subjected in Russia and elsewhere.

After a partial restoration, which it would seem will now soon be brought about, there will come suffering and despair, such as they have never yet had to endure, to be followed by a sudden and marvelous deliverance, as we read in Jer. XXX:7. —"Alas! for that day is great, so that none is like it: it is even the time of Jacob's trouble; but he

shall be saved out of it." And thus will Israel at last be brought to repentance. See Eze. XX:33-44; XXXVI:32; Zech. X:6-10; XII:9-14; Joel III:19-21. And compare Eze. XVI:62-63 with Ps. CXXX:3-4. They have had the curses, alas! See Deut. XXVIII. They shall also have the blessings. "And so all Israel shall be saved: even as it is written:

There shall come out of Zion the Deliverer:
He shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob:
And this is My covenant unto them,
When I shall take away their sins."
(Rom. XI:26-27.)

"My days are like a shadow that declineth;
And I am withered like grass."

Such is the instability and brevity of man's earthly estate, as the psalmist humbly confesses in our text. But he turns his eyes heavenward, and exclaims:

"But Thou, O Jehovah, wilt abide for ever;
And Thy memorial name unto all generations."

And then the Holy Spirit leads him to look down along the vista of time, and beyond the ages of his people's waywardness and wanderings, to that blessed epoch for which all nature sighs, when

Jehovah, the God of Israel, will indeed prove Himself to be "The faithful God, Who keepeth covenant and lovingkindness with them that love Him and keep His commandments *to a thousand generations*" (Deut. VII:9). And he as confidently affirms, as though it were already a matter of history:

"Thou wilt arise, and have mercy upon Zion;
For it is time to have pity upon her,
Yea, the set time is come."

And the prophet-psalmist adds a reason for, as well as a sign of, that coming day of wonders,—

"For Thy servants take pleasure in her stones,
And have pity upon her dust."

Previous to the last century very little was done by the Lord's people for the salvation of Israel, and little concerned were they in the re-establishment of the Hebrew commonwealth. But all this has greatly changed. Christian people are now, in many ways, seeking to promote the present and eternal well-being of the once almost universally despised and persecuted nation. Tens of thousands of Jews have, moreover, been savingly converted to God, indicating what a marvelous change will come over that people, when the Spirit of God shall come upon them in the plenitude of His power.

“So the nations shall fear the name of Jehovah,
And all the kings of the earth Thy glory.
For Jehovah hath built up Zion;
He hath appeared in His glory.
He hath regarded the prayer of the destitute,
And hath not despised their prayer.
This shall be written for the generation to come;
And a people which shall be created shall praise
Jehovah.”

As said London's great preacher, the Rev. Charles Haddon Spurgeon, Jerusalem's "ultimate resurrection . . . will be one of the prodigies of history."¹ In a marvelous way will our God yet prove His faithfulness, and that in the sight of all the nations of the earth, to the covenant into which He so graciously entered with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob, and through them with their posterity to the latest generation. An aged Jewish rabbi, at Grand Rapids, Michigan, was once spoken to in disparagement of some good people, who were holding some rather noisy meetings. "Don't say anything against these people," he said; "if I believed that Jesus of Nazareth was the Messiah, I'd go shouting up and down these streets day and night!" Ah! how that terrified, despairing remnant of Hebrews, for whose deliverance from the crushing power of the Anti-

¹ *The Treasury of David*, by C. H. Spurgeon, Vol. IV, page 423.

christ, our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ will visibly descend to this earth, accompanied by His glorified saints; how, like that suddenly startled and converted persecutor, Saul of Tarsus, will they hasten to all the ends of the earth, with the blessed and joyful tidings, that they themselves have looked upon Him Whom they had pierced, and that Jesus of Nazareth is in very deed their Messiah, the King of Israel, the Savior of the world! And with what glad acclaim will both people and rulers of every clime and nation, aid their Jewish friends and neighbors to return with these messengers of peace and salvation, to the land of their fathers, as is so graphically foretold in the 11th and 49th chapters of Isaiah. "Behold, the days come, saith Jehovah, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and He shall reign as King and deal wisely, and shall execute justice and righteousness in the land. In His days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely; and this is His name whereby He shall be called: Jehovah our righteousness. Therefore, behold, the days come, saith Jehovah, that they shall no more say, As Jehovah liveth, Who brought up the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt; but, As Jehovah liveth, Who brought up and Who led the seed of the house of Israel out of the north country, *and from all the countries whither I had*

driven them. And they shall dwell in their own land" (Jer. XXIII:5-8).

And thus will Israel's final redemption, as we read in Rom. XI:15, be as "life from the dead" to this sin-sick and sin-cursed race of ours, for then "many nations," as both Isaiah and Micah declare, "shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountains of Jehovah, and to the house of the God of Jacob; and He will teach us of His ways, and we will walk in His paths. For out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of Jehovah from Jerusalem: and He will judge between many peoples, and will decide concerning strong nations afar off: and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more. *But they shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig-tree; and none shall make them afraid: for the mouth of Jehovah of hosts hath spoken it*" (Micah IV:2-4).

Oh! how solemn and how pressing the obligation, that is thus brought home to the Christian Church of to-day, to hasten with the message of life and salvation to the ends of the earth, and especially too to tell the story of redeeming love to the lost sheep of the house of Israel!

And oh, my Christless hearer! can you not trust

yourself to the fatherly care and keeping of this Being of infinite mercy and faithfulness? And will you not, this day and hour, consecrate yourself to the service of His only begotten and well beloved Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, the Friend of sinners, the only Savior of the lost?

A TWOFOLD CAUSE OF ERROR

IGNORANCE OF THE SCRIPTURES AND OF THE POWER OF GOD

Matt. XXII:29-32. *"But Jesus answered and said unto them, Ye do err, not knowing the Scriptures, nor the power of God. For in the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are as angels in heaven. But as touching the resurrection of the dead, have ye not read that which was spoken unto you by God, saying, I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? God is not the God of the dead, but of the living."*

OUR Lord gives us here, for our prayerful meditation, a twofold cause of error, viz., ignorance of the Scriptures and of the power of God.

A primal cause of men's delusions, He assures us, is their ignorance of the Scriptures.

A notable instance of this sort of ignorance is furnished in the case of these Sadducees, who, while professing to accept their Hebrew Scriptures, at the same time claimed "that there is no resurrection, neither angel, nor spirit" (Acts XXIII:8). A strange paradox! Many a plain and explicit state-

ment, of course, had to be explained away. But then there is nothing singular about that, for has not the world been trying, during all these succeeding centuries, to explain away the New Testament as well as the Old?

Only last year there appeared, in a leading magazine for ministers of the Gospel, a most pitiful illustration of the extent to which men will go in perverting the Scriptures of truth.

God called Abram out of Ur of the Chaldees, for the very purpose of raising up a holy nation, and gave him the most solemn assurance, that in him and in his seed all the nations of the earth should be blessed. Through the prophet Isaiah He cries out, "Look unto Me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is none else" (Ch. XLV:22). And in Rom. XI:15 it is expressly declared, that the spiritual redemption of Israel will be as "life from the dead" to the rest of the world.

And yet this learned doctor of divinity, who is a professor in a noted theological school in the State of Massachusetts, in addressing the graduates of a similar institution, had the moral hardihood to say, that the Jewish doctrine of the Messianic kingdom virtually meant the extermination of all other nations. One can scarcely conceive of a more brazen-

faced attempt to turn the truth of God into a lie!

The case these Sadducees brought forward may have been a real, but more likely, was a purely imaginary one. That, however, is a matter of no importance. We are not concerned with their pretended difficulty, but rather with their amazing intellectual, moral, and spiritual stupidity.

The heaven of their imaginings was that of a degraded, brutalized paganism; not the pure and holy Paradise of God. "To the law and to the testimony! if they speak not according to this word, surely there is no morning for them" (Is. VIII:20).

"In the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are as angels in heaven." Even the holiest of earthly relations is but for this present life. The earthly family is but the blessed antetype of the family of God, which is being gathered out of all nations under heaven; whose members are all to be raised, or translated, to immortal bliss and glory, in the day of the appearing of the Lord Jesus Christ; and of whom He shall say to the attendant and admiring hosts of heaven, "Behold, I and the children whom God hath given Me" (Heb. II:13).

O yes, blessed be God! there have already been myriads of family reunions in heaven, and there will be myriads more; but the most beatific and

joyful reunion will be that, when the saints of all ages, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation, shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, at the marriage supper of the Lamb! And whether at midnight, at early dawn, or in the full light of day, may we all be ready, dear friends, when the cry shall be heard, "Behold, the Bridegroom! Come ye forth to meet Him!" (Matt. XXV:6).

"But as touching the resurrection of the dead, have ye not read that which was spoken unto you by God, saying, I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? God is not the God of the dead, but of the living." The living God is far more than simply the God of inert, lifeless matter; of bodies that have moldered back to dust. He is, in a far higher, more exalted sense, the God of the undying soul. "And Jehovah God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul" (Gen. II:7). And thus man became an emanation of Deity, created "in" the "image," and "after" the "likeness" of God (Gen. I:26). And so we are told that, at his death, "The dust returneth to the earth as it was, and the spirit returneth unto God Who gave it" (Eccle. XII:7). When God spoke to Moses out of the burning bush

Abraham, Isaac and Jacob had already been dead and buried for centuries, and yet He said to him, *not* that He had at one time been their God: but this is what He said, "I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob."

What was the trouble with those Sadducees? First of all, just what ails multitudes in our own day. While doubtless quite familiar with the written Word of God, they were yet utterly, amazingly ignorant as to its true import. And, alas! many a modern theologian scarce dreams of what may be found on almost any page of the Old Testament Scriptures; nay, he does not even comprehend the New Testament. And why? Because "the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him; and he cannot know them, because they are spiritually judged" (I. Cor. II:14). And unless fallen man is taught and guided by the Spirit of truth, he is very apt to misread the Book of God; yea, he is certain to pervert it to his own eternal undoing!

A once noted writer, in a magazine article, published in 1895, and entitled, "Christianity's Millstone," affirmed that the Old Testament is that millstone. The New Testament, it seems, must be separated from the Old; the two should not be

bound up in the same volume.¹ "The time," he says, "has surely come when, as a supernatural revelation, the Old Testament should frankly, though reverently, be laid aside, and nevermore allowed to cloud the vision of free enquiry, or to cast the shadow of primal religion on our modern life." Oh, yes! these folks are really willing to allow the Bible a place in our institutions of learning as a book for literary study. Says another writer, "Who shall say that it is not to be included in the curriculum of polite learning, *perhaps* of equal moment with Shakespeare?" And the poor souls imagine, in so saying, that they do the Bible high honor! Of course, they will have nothing to do with it as a revelation from heaven, concerning the character of God, or of His plan of redeeming love for our guilty race.

"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." That opening sentence of the book of Genesis tells us more about the origin of the material universe than all the ancient heathen cosmogonies and all the vain imaginings of these modern speculators put together! And have they devised something more perfect, as a code of morals, than the ten immortal words which Jehovah uttered from

¹ *The King's Business*, Los Angeles, Cal., May, 1916, page 417.

the top of Mount Sinai? Think too of the untold myriads of the Lord's people in every age, who, on their dying beds, have found sweet consolation in many a precious psalm!

But whence did they imbibe most of these perverted notions as to the infallible Book of God? From the very country whose leaders have appalled the whole world during these last few years, by the way in which they have openly and defiantly trampled on every dictate of humanity? Spurgeon, London's famous preacher, said once upon a time, "A German professor smokes his dirty pipe till he doesn't know which is Moses and which is Bismarck." Says Canon Dyson Hague, "In one word, the formative forces of the Higher Critical movement were rationalistic forces, and the men who were its chief authors and expositors, who 'on account of purely philological criticism have acquired an appalling authority,' were men who had discarded belief in God and Jesus Christ Whom He had sent."² Some months ago this amazing statement, by a professor in the University of Munich, appeared in one of our American magazines, "Thirty years ago Germany eliminated Christianity from its theology, and substituted a religion suitable to its Kultur." Oh, no, they didn't tell the Ger-

² *The Fundamentals*, Vol. I, page 98.

man people all that, those consummate hypocrites; they simply camouflaged. First they disposed of the five books of Moses, next they got rid of Isaiah, Ezekiel and Daniel, then of the apostolic writers, and then they went to work to try to prove that the four Gospels were a mere tissue of idle fabrications. And at last they have not hesitated to besmirch the character of the Man of Nazareth! Well, "By their fruits ye shall know them" (Matt. VII:16).

And the hideous exhibitions which the world has had of late, of the depths of infamy and fiendish brutality to which the modern Hun can sink, ought to convince any sane man or woman, of the folly and danger of turning one's back upon the only Book which, from beginning to end, proves itself to be a revelation from the living God; the only Book that has ever shown man the way from this sin-cursed earth to a heaven of unsullied purity and everlasting bliss!

To prove that the declaration at the burning bush, quoted by our Lord, was by no means either solitary or singular, let us look at certain other most significant statements. "But thou shalt go to thy fathers in peace; thou shalt be buried in a good old age." "Abraham . . . died . . . and was gathered to his people" (Gen. XV:15; XXV:8). And yet

his father Terah was buried in Haran, situated on one of the northern affluents of the Euphrates, and his brother Haran, as well as their forefathers, in Ur of the Chaldees, a country bordering on the same mighty river, near its southern terminus, while the patriarch himself was buried in the land of Canaan. Isaac, like his father, was buried in the cave of Machpelah, and yet we are told, when he died, not simply that he was gathered to his father and mother; but this, "Isaac died, and was gathered unto his people" (Gen. XXXV:29). The very same fact is affirmed concerning the patriarch Jacob, not weeks after his death, when his sons had brought his embalmed body from Egypt, and had entombed it in the cave of Machpelah, but immediately upon his decease. "And when Jacob made an end of charging his sons, he gathered up his feet into the bed, and yielded up the ghost, and was gathered unto his people" (Gen. XLIX:33). God assured Moses, "Thou shalt sleep with thy fathers," and yet He buried his body "in the valley in the land of Moab, . . . but," adds the historian, "no man knoweth of his sepulchre unto this day" (Deut. XXXI:16; XXXIV:6). When the prophet Nathan was sent to tell king David that not he, but his son, should build a house for Jehovah, he was, as we read in II. Sam. VII:12, addressed in these words,

"When thy days are fulfilled, and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers." In I. Chron. XVII:11 it reads, "And it shall come to pass, when thy days are fulfilled that *thou must go to be with thy fathers*, that I will set up thy seed after thee, who shall be of thy sons; and I will establish his kingdom." And yet David was buried at Jerusalem, while the sepulchre of his fathers was at Bethlehem. This being gathered to their people, or to their fathers, cannot therefore, in any of these cases, refer to the places where their bodies were laid to rest: but, in every case, can only refer to a gathering together of their undying souls.

This is how the Old Testament speaks of the continued conscious existence of the spirit of man. Does it also foretell the resurrection of the body?

Already before the flood we read of Enoch, "the seventh from Adam" (Jude 14), that he "walked with God . . . three hundred years: . . . and he was not; for God took him" (Gen. V:22, 24). And the famous prophet, Elijah the Tishbite, in the broad light of day, and in the sight of his servant and successor, Elisha, "went up," with "a chariot of fire, and horses of fire," "by a whirlwind into heaven" (II. Kings II:11). And did not the angel tell the prophet Daniel of the "many," the vast multitudes, "that sleep in the dust of the earth,"

that "shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt"? (Dan. XII: 2).

What clear, reiterated proofs of the continuous, separate, and intelligent existence of man, after the hour and article of death! What positive declaration, what wonderful, what visible demonstration of the coming rejuvenescence and glorification of the bodies of all the true people of God, and of the ultimate resurrection of all the race!

A second cause of error is here indicated, viz., Ignorance of the power of God. "Ye do err, not knowing the Scriptures, nor the power of God."

He Who could, in the twinkling of an eye, catch Enoch and Elijah up into heaven, has He not also the power to raise again the sleeping dust of all His saints of every age? And having then already, when our Lord uttered these words, by the space of four thousand years, sent forth those swift-winged messengers of light, the angels of His power, "to do service for the sake of them that shall inherit salvation" (Heb. I:14), is He not just as able to do on a grand and majestic scale, in the day of the resurrection of the just, for the believers then alive upon the earth, what He did do in the individual cases of Enoch and Elijah, viz., to instantaneously transform and etherealize these gross bodies of ours,

to remove from man every animal passion and desire, and to make him in all respects the equal of the holy inhabitants of heaven? Why nature itself, especially in the days of early spring, continually speaks to us of the resurrecting power of the great Creator.

While it was in the life and death of the Lord Jesus Christ, the God-Man, that the Divine love was fully manifested, nevertheless the love of God to fallen man was taught throughout the entire Hebrew Scriptures. And we have now seen, while, as says an apostle, our adorable Redeemer "abolished death, and brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel" (II. Tim. I:10) in all their glorious fulness, that yet the olden Scriptures were by no means silent in regard to these grand doctrines, that lie at the very foundation of all true religion.

It is indeed preposterous to suppose that the God of love should have left His intelligent earthly creatures, and even such as His Holy Spirit had led to repentance, had sanctified, and had "made . . . meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light" (Col. I:12), "who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the power of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, from weak-

ness were made strong, . . . received their dead by a resurrection," while "others were tortured," or, as the margin has it, "beaten to death," "not accepting their deliverance; that they might obtain a better resurrection" (Heb. XI:33-35): it is utterly preposterous to suppose that He would have left the world, and even His praying, struggling, persecuted saints, for full four thousand years in utter, absolute ignorance as to their eternal state, or whether indeed there was a hereafter at all! *Away with the detestable idea!* Why, every orthodox Jew in our Lord's day knew better than that, and that altogether apart from His own blessed teachings. When He said to Martha of Bethany, "Thy brother shall rise again," she at once returned the confident answer, "I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day" (John XI:23, 24). The apostle Paul assured king Agrippa, that all the twelve tribes of Israel were living in hope of a glorious resurrection, in accordance with "the promise made of God unto" their "fathers" (Acts XXVI:6). And what of those ancient Hebrew worthies, already referred to, who would not accept "their deliverance" from a martyr's death, assured that by surrendering life itself, they would become heirs to "a better resurrection"?

Ah! let us see to it, dear hearers, that we study,

diligently and prayerfully, the whole revealed will of God. As we cannot gain a full understanding of the Old Testament, without a thorough acquaintance with the New, neither can we understand the New Testament Scriptures, if we altogether neglect the Old. And we do ourselves great wrong, if we fail to familiarize ourselves with these more ancient sacred oracles, "For," as we read in Rom. XV:4, "whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that through patience and through comfort of the Scriptures we might have hope."

How our blessed Redeemer loved to recall these Old Testament Scriptures, and to dwell upon them. How ardently His followers ought likewise to love them, were it only for His sake. And how His unerring example should spur us on, and convince us of their inestimable value to each one of us!

"Never man so spake," said the officers who had been sent "to take Him," and so overawed were they, that they did not venture to lay "hands on Him" (John VII:46, 32, 44). Astounded as were His hearers at His direct utterances, they were no less so at the way in which He quoted Moses and the prophets.

But how came it to pass that Christ quoted Scripture so aptly? The answer is plain enough. The

Lord Jesus, as the late Joseph Parker, of London, has well said, "Himself *wrote* them. The Scriptures were quoted from Him, He did not quote from the Scriptures. He only quotes *Himself*, and quotes Himself with the emphasis which the writer of any deep literature alone can give to his own words." ³

But what Scriptural warrant had this writer for these statements? Is the Old Testament really Christ's own word to us? In the prologue to the Gospel according to John it is declared, at verse 18, "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, Who is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him." Who then was "the Voice of Jehovah God" (Gen. III:8)? Who "the Judge of all the earth," with Whom Abraham plead on behalf of the cities of the plain (Gen. XVIII:25)? Who the Jehovah Who "stood above" the ladder of Jacob's vision (Ch. XXVIII:13)? Who the "I AM THAT I AM" of "the bush" that "burned with fire, and" that "was not consumed" (Ex. III:14, 2)? For answer let us attend to the opening words of the Gospel just quoted, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made through

³ *The Inner Life of Christ*, Vol. III, page 143.

Him; and without Him was not anything made that hath been made" (John I:1-3).

Our Lord said to the unbelieving Jews, "Verily, verily, I saw unto you, Before Abraham was born, I am" (John VIII:58). And elsewhere He declared, "All things have been delivered unto Me of My Father: and no one knoweth the Son, save the Father; neither doth any know the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son willeth to reveal Him" (Matt. XI:27). Of the Old Testament Scriptures He said, "These are they which bear witness of Me" (John V:39). And the aged revelator was told that "The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy" (Rev. XIX:10).

Verily our blessed Lord, by His Spirit, does Himself speak to us in all Scripture. And let us never forget that it is only in so far as we are guided by this same Spirit of truth, that we shall be able to take in the blessed truths of this Book of books.

Having quoted His own declaration at the burning bush, our Lord, in His answer to the Sadducees, added these pregnant words of vast and solemn import, "God is not the God of the dead, but of the living." The immortal spirits of the patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, in that unseen world, whither the angels had convoyed them at death, were still enjoying the favor of God in the

days of Moses, nor less when our Lord first uttered these words. And to this very hour He is still their God.

My dear hearer, is He your God? Are you living a life of faith upon the Son of God? or are you still dead in "trespasses and sins" (Eph. II:1)? Says the Savior, John V:24-25, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth My word, and believeth Him that sent Me, hath eternal life, and cometh not into judgment, but hath passed out of death into life. Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour cometh, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God; and they that hear shall live." The reference is here evidently to the spiritual awakening, i. e., the conversion and regeneration of sinners. This is made still clearer by what almost immediately follows, in verses 28 and 29, where our Lord, in speaking of the ultimate resurrection of the body, says, "Marvel not at this: for the hour cometh, in which all that are in the tombs shall hear His voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of judgment."

"God is not the God of the dead, but of the living." Beloved hearer, has your life hitherto been evil in the sight of that Holy One, Who cannot look

upon sin but with abhorrence? In other words, Are you dead to God and to holiness? Man became spiritually dead when first he fell away from his allegiance to God. And Holy Writ admonishes us that by and by there is to be a "second death" (Rev. XX:14), i. e., the finally lost will be eternally separated from the favor of God, and from the fellowship of all the holy on earth and in heaven. Oh! we beseech you, to-day, this very hour, listen to the voice of the Son of God! "They that hear shall live." "Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from" among "the dead, and Christ shall shine upon thee!" (Eph. V:14). Turn even now from your evil ways, and accept of the mercy so freely offered to you in Christ, lest perchance you too be undone for ever!

THE FALL OF MAN

PARADISE BESTOWED, LOST, AND REGAINED

Rom. V: 12, 20-21. *"Therefore, as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin; and so death passed unto all men, for that all sinned. . . . And the law came in besides, that the trespass might abound; but where sin abounded, grace did abound more exceedingly: that, as sin reigned in death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."*

ENGLAND'S blind bard has sung in majestic strain:

"Of man's first disobedience and the fruit
Of that forbidden tree, whose mortal taste
Brought death into the world and all our woe,
With loss of Eden, till one greater Man
Restore us, and regain the blissful seat:"

and even so does Holy Writ speak to us of a three-fold Paradise, viz.,

A Paradise Bestowed,
A Paradise Lost, and
A Paradise Regained.

The historians and poets of ancient pagan nations delighted to dwell upon the felicity of mankind during that golden age in which, as they fondly dreamed, all was peace and harmony among men. The sure Word of God, however, informs us that that happy time passed away very quickly, as it was only a little while after his creation, when man forsook his allegiance to Jehovah, and when he was exiled from the abodes of bliss.

The answer to the 20th question of the *Larger Westminster Catechism* is as follows: "The providence of God toward man, in the estate in which he was created, was, the placing him in Paradise, appointing him to dress it, giving him liberty to eat of the fruit of the earth, putting the creatures under his dominion, and ordaining marriage for his help; affording him communion with Himself, instituting the Sabbath, entering into a covenant of life with him, upon condition of personal, perfect, and perpetual obedience, of which the tree of life was a pledge; and forbidding to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, upon pain of death."

This comprehensive statement of the Westminster divines is far from overdrawn, as we shall find in seeking, first of all, to establish and ponder this fact, viz., God bestowed a Paradise upon man.

And this is, dear hearers, a matter of immense importance. It has to do with the very foundations of our holy religion. Our enemies understand this very well, and that is why modern unbelief, though in the very teeth, not only of the positive declarations of Holy Scripture, but also of the uniform testimony of all antiquity, is constantly seeking to belie this fundamental fact. Alas! that so many have been led astray by these pitiful delusions, so dishonoring to God, and which have done such incalculable harm to the souls of men.

What now has the scientific world to say to-day, as to all these wretched attempts to unsettle our faith in the Bible as a direct revelation from God? "Evolution is bankrupt."¹ We are invited to *The Death-Bed of Darwinism*.² "Natural Selection," "The Transmission of Species," "The Survival of the Fittest." All these have been "swept away," are "absolutely gone," and may be safely consigned to the limbo of things forgotten. Biologists are

¹ *Q. E. D., or New Light on the Doctrine of Creation*, by George McCready Price, Professor of Chemistry and Physics, Lodi Academy, California, 1917, *passim*. See also *A Critique of the Theory of Evolution*. Lectures delivered in 1916 at Princeton University by Prof. Thomas Hunt Morgan of Columbia University.

² Title of a book published in Germany a few years ago.

compelled to confess that they are entirely ignorant as to the origin of either plant or animal life. And even geology, according to some of its leading exponents, must for ever stop talking about those supposedly *vast ages* during which, as we were once so dogmatically assured, the various strata of the rocks were in process of formation; for we are now told that that was all moonshine, *because there are no fossils older than man*, all fossiliferous rocks being of about the same age! And, to think of it, there may even have been a universal deluge, at which time, for aught that science can now show to the contrary, those mighty upheavals may have taken place, which account for the way in which the rocks are found topsy-turvy all over our globe.

The fittest "surviving." Not at all. "*Not the evolution of matter, but the degeneration of matter*, is the plain and unescapable lesson to be drawn from these facts."³ And again, "It is a universal law of living things that all forms left to themselves tend to degenerate."⁴ Oh, yes! come to think of it, that's what the good old Book tells us in regard to our race, that we are fallen beings, whose moral and spiritual tendency is for ever downward, save as the renewing and sanctifying grace of God inter-

³ *Q. E. D.*, p. 24.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 94.

venes, which alone can fit us both for this world and the next.

Certainly believers in a living, omnipresent, and omniscient God have no cause for alarm. On the contrary, we do have abundant reason to protest against having this wretched stuff, now so utterly exploded, still largely doled out by the public press, and, what is far worse, in the class-room, by those who are seemingly too indolent, or who lack sufficient intellectual independence, to inquire for themselves as to what are the actual, present-day teachings of the leaders in scientific inquiry. "The science of geology as commonly taught," we are told, "is truly in a most astonishing condition, and doubtless presents the most peculiar mixture of fact and nonsense to be found in the whole range of our modern knowledge. . . . That most educated people still believe its main theses of *a definite age for each particular kind of fossil* is a sad but instructive example of the effects of mental inertia." ⁵

And now science is actually bringing us back to the opening chapter of the book of Genesis, for it also reaffirms the teachings of Holy Writ, in telling us that "every seed," whether of herb, or beast, or bird, or of the fishes of the sea, can only bring forth "after its kind." And that brings us to the con-

⁵ Ibid., p. 118.

sideration of a matter vitally connected with the subject now before us.

The late Professor Alexander Winchell, in 1880, published his once famous work, entitled, "Pre-Adamites; or a demonstration of the existence of Men before Adam: together with a study of their Condition, Antiquity, Racial Affinities, and Progressive Dispersion over the earth." And here is a specimen of how the learned man *demonstrated*; or rather, it shows what wild, often self-contradictory, guesses many of these physical scientists indulge in, and they really seem to expect that the common man, overawed by their superior wisdom, will abandon his common horse-sense, and swallow the wretched stuff! We quote from pages 349 and 350 of this large and pretentious volume. "Dr. John Davy, after describing a fine albino girl of Ceylon, adds, 'It is easy to conceive that an *accidental* variety of the kind might propagate, and that the White race of mankind is sprung from such an *accidental* variety. The (East) Indians are of this opinion; and there is a tradition or story among them, in which this origin is assigned to us.' " After giving some one else's testimony as to the noble character of the aborigines of India, he adds, "On the whole, I think the Dravidian presents rather the most probable point of connection between the

Adamites and the other races." But there never were any other races of men, before or after Adam; no proof of that sort has ever yet been produced!

How many a physical scientist, in the excess of his moral and mental idiocy, has actually sought to trace his own genealogy and family relationship, and that of the race, up, or rather down to, the chattering, grinning baboon, or some other species of pure bestiality! Quite recently they are swinging clear around, and tell us that the monkey has sprung from some degenerate specimen of the genus homo! The one theory is just about as worthless as the other. As for man having descended from some lower animal, the missing link, however diligently sought, has never been found.⁶ "The late Robert Etheridge of the British Museum, head of the geological department, and one of the ablest of British paleontologists, has said, 'In all that great museum there is not a particle of evidence of transmutation of species. Nine-tenths of the talk of evolutionists is not founded on observation, and is usually wholly unsupported by facts.' " Says another, "Neither on the earth, nor under the earth, is any trace of an ape ancestry discoverable."⁷ "Professor Virchow,

⁶ See *The Fundamentals*, Vol. VIII, p. 83.

⁷ *Scientific Sophisms*, by Samuel Wainwright, D.D., p. 239.

of Berlin, admittedly the ablest anthropologist of modern times . . . declared: 'In vain have the links, which should bind man to the monkey, been sought; not a single one is there to show.'"⁸ And he is said to have declared with vehemence, "on another occasion, regarding evolution, 'It's all nonsense. You are as far as ever you were from establishing any connection between man and the ape.'"⁹

There is one thing which does demand our most serious attention. Have we not all heard time and again that primeval man was little or nothing more than a rude, ignorant savage? We have no hesitation at all to denounce that assumption as wholly gratuitous, a libel against Heaven, and contrary to all the teachings of history, both sacred and profane. The folly of it will, as we trust, appear fully as we proceed.

In Col. III:10 it is declared that "the new man . . . is being renewed unto knowledge, after the image of Him that created him"; and in Eph. IV: 23-24 the apostle writes, "And that ye be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and put on the new man, that after God hath been created in righteousness and holiness of truth." These Scriptures clearly imply that God did not send forth the last and

⁸ *The Fundamentals*, Vol. VIII, p. 28.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 83.

noblest of His creatures in a state of utter ignorance and abject helplessness: but, contrariwise, that He endowed the first pair with "knowledge, righteousness, and holiness," and that this is precisely what is meant by the declaration, in the opening chapter of Genesis, that God created man in His "image," and "after" His "likeness" (v. 26). As says the wise Solomon, "God made man upright" (Eccle. VII: 29); not only erect in form, but likewise pure, stainless in intellect, heart, and will. Not only was he free from all moral taint; but he was likewise far removed from the condition of an untutored savage.

"A man is known by the company he keeps," says the old adage, and it is a universally acknowledged fact, that no educational force is equal to familiar and daily communion with the great and good, the wise and the noble of earth, either by personal intercourse, or by means of the printed page.

What now are the facts in the case of our first parents? Adam is no sooner created but he comes into immediate personal contact and fellowship with his Maker; and, what is really an immense factor in the problem before us, he proves himself both morally and intellectually fit to hold converse and communion with his Father and his God, as being indeed a being of kindred spirit, however infinite

the distance that separates the creature from the Creator.

As has been so ably argued by that eloquent writer of a century and a half ago, the Rev. Dr. Patrick Delany,¹⁰ of Dublin, Ireland. God endowed Adam and Eve with a remarkable amount of knowledge, and that from the very day and hour of their creation; knowledge too which could have come to, or been gained by, them only through direct revelation from, or impartation by, Deity.

It was God Who bestowed upon Adam and Eve the power of articulate, intelligible speech, which of itself differentiates man from all the other creatures of earth. And it was God Who, moreover, at once gave them a vocabulary, a list or stock of words, amply sufficient to enable them to hold intelligent converse with each other and with the Author of their being. And all this, as the whole history of the race has abundantly proved, they never could have secured in any other way. Imagine, if you choose, "a gradual conversion of brute howlings into articulate speech," but please bear in mind that even Professor Huxley felt compelled to make this remarkable admission: "Believing as I do, with Cuvier," he says, "that the possession of articulate speech is the grand distinctive character of man,

¹⁰ *Revelation Examined with Candour*, Vols. I and III.

. . . the primary cause of the UNMEASURABLE and *practically infinite* divergence of the Human from the Simian stirps."

However diverse the dialects and languages of mankind have been, since God confounded their speech at Babel, and although living languages are constantly undergoing various changes, yet to this very day man has never discovered the first syllable of human speech. As says Dr. Samuel Johnson, speaking of the origin of language, "It must have come by inspiration. A thousand—nay, a million of children could not invent a language. While the organs are pliable, there is not understanding enough to form a language; by the time that there is understanding enough, the organs are become stiff. No foreigner who comes to England when advanced in life ever pronounces English tolerably well; at least such instances are very rare. When I maintain that language must have come by inspiration, I do not mean that inspiration is required for rhetoric, and all the beauties of language; for when once man has language, we can conceive that he may gradually form modifications of it. I mean only that inspiration seems to me to be necessary to give man the faculty of speech; to inform him that he may have speech; which I think he could no more find

out without inspiration than cows or hogs would think of such a faculty."

To this conclusive reasoning of the famous lexicographer it may be added, that the extent and marvelous accuracy of this revelation of language appears most clearly from the fact that Adam, on the very day of his creation, "gave" appropriate "names to all cattle, and to the birds of the heavens, and to every beast of the field" (Gen. II:20).

And modern philology, in showing more and more conclusively, that the multiform tongues and dialects of the tribes and kindreds of earth, do all point back to one common origin, is proclaiming anew, and with an ever-increasing emphasis, the inspired declaration, that God "made of one every nation of men, to dwell on all the face of the earth" (Acts XVII:26).

Time will not allow us to more than mention the other revelations, which were made to man on the day in which he was created.

God assured man, and inspired him with the undoubted conviction, that he, the last product of Jehovah's handiwork, was His vice-gerent on earth, the absolute lord over all the lower animal creation. And in order that man's sway over these multiform creatures might be an intelligent one, he was at the same time given a wonderful knowledge in regard

to their widely varying capabilities and powers. A revelation but for which, in the presence of beast, and bird, and creeping thing, weak, defenceless man would at once have been plunged into helpless misery and hopeless despair.

A beneficent Creator both provided most abundantly for man's bodily sustenance, and imparted to him all needed information as to how and when he should make use of these herbs and fruits.

God likewise gave the first pair immediate, clear knowledge in regard to the institution of marriage, and as to all that is holy and blessed in the Heaven-ordained relations of the sexes to one another.

Adam and Eve were also at once made acquainted with the law of the Sabbath, or weekly day of rest. And that the week, with its six days of toil, and a seventh for worship, dates, not from the Divine utterance of those ten immortal words, spoken with audible voice from the top of Mt. Sinai, but is coeval with the birth of the race, is incidentally proved by the tenor of the whole book of Genesis, and of that marvelous work of patriarchal times, the book of Job.

What then, in brief, was the condition of the first pair? and what of that paradisaic state into which they were ushered by the all-wise and beneficent Creator? They came forth from the plastic

hand of Deity, with every faculty of body and mind perfect after its kind, perfectly fitted to do their bidding, and perfectly adapted to yield them unalloyed happiness in their mutual intercourse, in the worship and service of their heavenly Father, and in the devout and admiring contemplation of His wondrous works. And in entire harmony with all this, and in order that they might intelligently serve God, and be truly helpful to each other, and that they and their immediate posterity might, so to speak, have a fair start in life, they were, at the very beginning of their career, endowed with all needful knowledge, whence they might press on unto perfection.

And then Jehovah placed the happy pair in a garden of delights, a Paradise, fitted up expressly to be their abode, where every prospect pleased and delighted the eye, and where their every want was provided for with a most royal bounty! Says the sacred historian, "And Jehovah God planted a garden eastward, in Eden; and there He put the man whom He had formed, . . . to dress it, and to keep it" (Gen. II:8, 15). "And out of the ground made Jehovah God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food" (v. 9).

Such the Paradise, and such the paradisaic state of peace and joy, full too of the brightest pros-

pects in an altogether unclouded future, which "the Father of lights" (James I:17) had bestowed upon the primogenitors of the human race.

We pass on to notice the deplorable fact that this Paradise was lost.

The text tells us how this grievous loss came about. "Through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin." God had created man in His "image," and "after" His "likeness," which means, as we have already learned from the writings of the apostle Paul, and from the remarkable revelations which Jehovah made to them, that intellectually, morally, and spiritually our first parents were, in their measure, a true reflection and image of the great Creator.

If the question is asked, How it was possible that evil should find an entrance into minds and hearts so altogether pure and stainless, we can only answer in the language of one of the fathers of the Primitive Church, "The demand to fully explain the origin of evil in the heart not hitherto depraved, is as unreasonable as would be the demand to see the darkness and to hear silence." Mere speculations as to the origin of evil, it may be added, are utterly vain and unprofitable. The Rev. Dr. Lyman Beecher once gave this homely bit of advice to his son Edward, which we may all of us take to heart, "If the Al-

mighty has got into trouble about the origin of sin, don't you try to help Him out." The business of the Christian pulpit is of far too solemn import, that the ambassador of the court of heaven should stoop to pander to men of dishonest minds, who have itching ears, but no sincere desire to know and to do the will of God. And let the caviler show, first of all, how the creation of an intelligent and morally accountable being, whether angel or man, is possible, without endowing him with the power of choice between good and evil.

Let us, dear hearers, the rather turn our prayerful attention to those sad and appalling facts, which the Word of God reveals to us, and whose frightful consequences everywhere stare us in the face, in the history of our sin-burdened and sin-cursed race.

"In the midst of" that primeval Paradise, the ancestral home of mankind, stood "the tree of life," and near by "the tree of the knowledge of good and evil." Concerning this last tree Jehovah had issued the inexorable decree, "Thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die" (Gen. II:17). And thus God had put the first pair immediately under the binding power, and had thrown around them, the protecting ægis, of a most positive and solemn moral enactment. Other laws were given, as we have seen, in relation

to marriage, the weekly day of rest, and so on: but this was the only interdictory, prohibitory command given to the human family. Everything else was theirs, theirs to gratify their tastes, to use, and to enjoy; everything save only the fruit of this one tree; that they must leave uneaten, untouched.

How the blind dupes of Satan have sneered at all this; how ready the vicious and profane still are to ridicule this simple command of Jehovah. But in so doing they but advertise their own ignorance and moral baseness.

Ushered as Adam and Eve at once were into a world of abundance, where everything was placed at their beck, might not God set a bound, in this one particular, to their otherwise absolute dominion? Surely all the malign and fiendish ingenuity of infidels and scoffers never will be able to prove that this was aught else than a most wise and beneficent enactment.

This command was God-like in its simplicity, and for that very reason eminently suited to the inexperience of the first pair. The thing interdicted was something that stood forth in the open light of day; and if they laid their hands upon it, they would sin, as it were, in the sight of earth and heaven. It served too as a constant reminder of Him, to Whom they owed life itself, and from Whose bountiful

hand came every blessing which they enjoyed. And was not this the best possible safeguard, to secure their continuance in the way of obedience? What could better have served to constantly remind them of their obligation to serve, worship, and adore the sovereign Ruler of heaven and earth?

Of course we have all along taken for granted that the sacred writer, guided by the unerring Spirit of God, is narrating real historical facts, and not mere myths or allegorical fancies. And this Biblical account of the trial and fall of our first parents is either veritable history, or else the whole account of the creation of man, and of the divine origin of our race, is but a fable, and the whole Bible little more than an idle and a worthless tale, good enough to indulge the speculative fancy of philosophical dreamers, but altogether powerless to speak with divine and commanding authority to the human conscience, to restore "the soul," and make "wise the simple" (Ps. XIX:7).

No, my brethren, this modern elective process will not answer! The militant Church of God, nay, our fallen humanity, needs a whole Bible; not a fragmentary scroll, placed at the mercy of a vain and godless philosophy, and of a boastful, but falsely so-called science! As said the late Rev. George W. Bethune, D.D., "If part be allegory, the whole

is allegory; the account of creation is allegory, man is but an allegorical being, and all human beings, you and I and the rest of our race, are mere figments of a poetical description.”¹¹

The all-wise God put man's loyalty and fealty to the test; the trial was made under circumstances the most favorable; man was tempted by Satan, yielded in an evil hour, and fell from his high estate, and “hence our nature has become so corrupt, that we are all conceived and born in sin.”¹²

Of the temptation itself, and of the means which the great adversary employed, and whereby he succeeded, alas! in deceiving the mother of us all, we should like to speak at length, did not the wide scope of the present subject forbid it, lest we altogether weary your patience.

A few words must suffice, and we pass on. Let it be remarked, first of all, that there is nothing incongruous, or irrational, in this whole transaction, as reported by Moses. On the contrary, every word proves the primeval innocence of the first pair, and the consummate skill of Satan, which at last enabled him to compass their ruin. Eve at first defends the goodness of God. She did not, like too many of

¹¹ *Expository Lectures on the Heidelberg Catechism*, Vol. I, p. 66.

¹² *Heidelberg Catechism*, Answer to Question 7.

her descendants, court temptation; yet, alas, she stopped to parley with the tempter, and that proved her ruin!

That the archfiend should have used a serpent—the very creature too that was best adapted to accomplish his diabolical purpose—in order to beguile the mother of us all, is not a whit more incredible than that the Angel of Jehovah employed the dumb ass to rebuke the prophet Balaam. And certainly Holy Writ does not leave us in doubt as to the direct agency of the chief of the fallen angels in this matter, for, in John VIII:44, our Lord speaks of him as having been “a murderer from the beginning, and” one who “standeth not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. . . . A liar, and the father thereof.” And in Revelation XII:9 “the great dragon . . . is called the Devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world,” and is expressly styled “the old serpent.” If any one innocently imagines that that fallen angel wasn’t bad enough deliberately to plot the ruin of the innocent pair, then we simply want to ask this one question, What of these men and women, veritable imps of Satan, who are found in almost every community, and whose main object in life seems to be to damn the souls of their fellow-men?

But again, the adversary approached Eve through

the only channel by means of which he could invade the citadel of her soul. As creatures come from God she and her husband had not only been endowed with knowledge, as we have already seen, but, as rational intelligences, they were destined to grow in knowledge; their minds and hearts were to expand, and to go on expanding eternally. Well, said the serpent, here is a tree—the very name that God has given it proves it—that will make you and Adam wondrously wise. It has given me, until now a dumb brute, the speech and intelligence of man; eat of it, and “your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as God, knowing good and evil. And when the woman saw,” or rather, imagined that she saw, “that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat; and she gave also unto her husband with her, and he did eat” (Gen. III:5-6).

Of this whole account of the temptation and fall we unhesitatingly affirm, that it bears upon its very face every mark of historic accuracy and truthfulness, and that a more wonderfully concise, and yet clear and simple statement of facts that actually took place, cannot be found in the writings of men.

What happened that day and hour
When man by disobedience fell?

Says a holy apostle, "The serpent beguiled Eve in his craftiness" (II. Cor. XI:3). And Adam took from her hand, and, following his wife's deplorable example, he also ate of the forbidden fruit, as says Bickersteth, in his devout epic, entitled *Yesterday, To-Day and For Ever*,—

"Not circumscribed by the serpent's fraud,
But blindly overcome by human love,
Love's semblance, which belied its name, denying
The Great Creator for the creature's sake."¹³

What did they do? They turned their backs upon the Author of their being, the bountiful Giver of every comfort and blessing which they enjoyed; in a word, they rebelled against His righteous and universal sway, and trampled on His "commandment," which was "holy, and righteous, and good" (Rom. VII:12).

What has been the result? To answer that question fully one would need to be able to marshal before us the story of the race from that very hour until now, with all its dread array of acts of wanton disobedience and open transgression; of consequent shame, sorrow, and remorse; of foulest fraud, cruelty, and oppression, and of crimes of deepest dye. Nay, one would need to look with the eye of

¹³ Book 5, lines 527-530.

omniscience into limitless futurity, to understand the tremendous and appalling import of the inspired affirmation, that "sin entered into the world, and death through sin."

But what of the dread sentence, "For in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die"? Ah! its execution did not have to wait upon the hour when "they heard the Voice of Jehovah God, walking in the garden in the cool of the day," coming to pronounce their doom, and to send them forth beyond the gates of bliss. No sooner had they eaten of the forbidden fruit, but "the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked" (Gen. III:7, 8). Conscience, God's vicegerent in the breast of all His intelligent creatures, at once asserted itself, and Adam and Eve stood condemned at its bar. The death spiritual had already benumbed their guilty souls, and the seeds of physical death had now also been sown; nor less certainly would the death eternal of soul and body in hell have been their everlasting portion, and that of all their descendants to the remotest generation, had not the infinite wisdom and mercy of God devised and carried out a wondrous plan of redemption.

To the query as to who are directly involved in the sin and fall of our first parents, the text makes the definite answer. "And so death passed unto all

men, for that all sinned"; or, as the margin of our old English Bible renders the last clause, in full accord with the best of ancient and modern Continental European versions, "In whom all have sinned," i. e., "death passed upon all men through him in whom all have sinned."¹⁴

The representative character of our Lord Jesus Christ is gladly acknowledged by the devout believer. Every one who comes to God by Him, and finds pardon and peace in believing, rejoices in the blessed assurance that Christ represented him when He suffered upon the accursed tree. Well, our Lord, the great Head of the Church of God, is expressly termed "The second Man," "The last Adam" (I. Cor. XV:47, 45). Christ is the federal Head, the official Representative of the redeemed of all ages, and because He lives they shall live also. "They that received the abundance of grace, and of the gift of righteousness," shall "reign in life through the one, even Jesus Christ" (Rom. V:17).

Jehovah's plan of redeeming love provided simply and alone for the trial of one, not of many, in and through whom should be made the sublime attempt to rescue fallen man. Our blessed Redeemer,

¹⁴ Rev. Willis Lord's Tract, *The Federal Character of Adam*, p. 9.

the God-Man, stood the test! He endured unto the end, and brought in everlasting righteousness. That ensures the eternal safety and happiness of all who come unto God by Him.

Even so was it with "the first man Adam." The race was to stand or fall in him, its federal head. Notice the emphasis which the Scriptures of truth place upon the one offence of the one man Adam. "Through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin. . . . By the trespass of the one the many died. . . . The judgment came of one unto condemnation. . . . By the trespass of the one," i. e., by the one offence of the one man, "death reigned through the one. . . . Through one trespass the judgment came unto all men to condemnation. . . . Through the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners" (Rom. V:12, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19). Can language possibly be more emphatic? It is the one offence of the one man that has

"Brought death into the world and all our woe."

And when we consider all the favoring circumstances, under which the trial of man's fealty was made, have we not reason to bless God for having, in His all-wise providence, suffered the trial to be speedily made? Where could have been found a better place for man than Paradise? When a time

for him more favorable, in which to withstand Satan's wiles, than while still so fully conscious of the wonderful beneficence of his Creator God?

And who will presume to say, that had he been in Adam or Eve's place, he would not have fallen? Have we not all of us stumbled and fallen times without number? Aye, the history of our race from that day on proves to a demonstration, that not a single mere man has ever lived upon this globe, but what, had he been in Adam's place, he would have fallen, even as he fell.

And to "the fall and disobedience of our first parents, Adam and Eve, in Paradise," it is, alas! so perfectly easy to trace the moral and spiritual corruption of our nature, for, as in the case of Seth, we are all begotten in the "likeness" and "after" the "image" of our great forefather Adam (Gen. V:3).

We do all of us, beloved hearers, verily belong by nature to a fallen race. Well may we confess with the fathers of the Reformation,¹⁵ "Man . . . being in honor, he understood it not, neither knew his excellency, but wilfully subjected himself to sin, and consequently to death and the curse, giving ear to the words of the Devil. . . . And being thus become wicked, perverse, and corrupt in all his ways, he hath lost all his excellent gifts, which he

¹⁵ *Belgic Confession*, Art. 14.

had received from God, and only retained a few remains thereof, which, however, are sufficient to leave man without excuse . . . All the light which is in us is changed into darkness, as the Scriptures teach us, saying, "The light shineth in the darkness, and the darkness comprehended it not" (John I:5), where St. John calleth men darkness. Therefore we reject all that is taught repugnant to this, concerning the free will of man, since man is but a slave to sin; and has nothing of himself, unless it is given him from heaven. For who may presume to boast, that he of himself can do any good, since Christ saith, "No man can come to Me, except the Father, that sent Me, draw him"? (John VI:44). Who will glory in his own will, who understands that "the mind of the flesh is enmity against God"? (Rom. VIII:7). Who can speak of his knowledge, since "the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God"? (I. Cor. II:14). In short, who dare suggest any thoughts, since he knows that we are not sufficient of ourselves to think anything as of ourselves, but that our sufficiency is of God? And therefore what the apostle saith ought justly to be held sure and firm, that "it is God Who worketh in us both to will and to work, for His good pleasure" (Phil. II:13). For there is no will nor understanding, conformable to the Divine will

and understanding, but what Christ hath wrought in man; which He teaches us when He saith, "Apart from Me ye can do nothing" (John XV:5).

Sin, my hearers, is an actual, a dreadful fact in the history of our race, and in the life of every individual soul. "For all have sinned, and fall short of the glory of God" (Rom. III:23). Says that eminent English Puritan, Thomas Manton, "Our sin is charged upon us collectively in common: we have all gone astray. Distributively: every one to his own way. We all agree in turning aside from the right way of pleasing and enjoying . . . God; and we disagree, as each one hath a by-path of his own, some running after this lust, some after that, and so are not only divided from God, but divided from one another, while every one maketh his will his law."

Men may rave at all this; they may utter their flippant sneers at the idea that Adam and Eve, for so trifling an offence, as they ignorantly and recklessly presume to call it, should be turned out of Paradise. They may, in their folly and moral madness, make a mock at sin, and even presume to charge the Most High with folly, and try to hold their Maker responsible for their wickedness, saying, like some of old, who complained that "The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are

set on edge" (Eze. XVIII:2), "We can't help ourselves; it's our temperament; we are just what God made us," and then rush blindly and madly on in the service of the world, the flesh, and the Devil: but we solemnly warn you, beloved hearer, if you have ever cherished such like thoughts, to remember the apostle's indignant remonstrance, "Let God be found true, but every man a liar" (Rom. III:4).

As for this phrenological humbuggery of hunting for the bumps in a man's head, and that *not* for the purpose of revealing to himself his besetting sins, that he may flee to God for mercy, and for grace to help him in every time of need: *but* in order to palliate his wickedness, to console him in the midst of his moral pollution, and to stifle the voice of conscience; it is, from first to last, a veritable Devil's trap to catch souls, that he may the more readily drag them down to bottomless perdition!

No! sin is not of God, but of the Devil, and of human depravity, instigated and allured by the evil one. Hence the words of "the Preacher," "Behold, this only have I found; that God made man upright; but they have sought out many inventions" (Eccle. VII:29). And the apostle James writes, "Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God; for God cannot be tempted with evil, and He Himself tempteth no man: but each man is

tempted, when he is drawn away by his own lust, and enticed. Then the lust, when it hath conceived, beareth sin; and the sin, when it is fullgrown, bringeth forth death." Again, speaking of that wondrous gift of God, the power of human speech, and of the oft frightful perversion of so great a blessing, he exclaims, "And the tongue is a fire: the world of iniquity among our members is the tongue, which defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the wheel of nature; and is set on fire by hell!" (James I:13-15; III:6).

But though our race is in such a deplorable and frightful plight, and though the earth itself was cursed for man's sake, and has ever since proved a vale of tears, and to vast multitudes the scene of unutterable anguish and despair; yet, blessed be God! His holy Word speaks to us of a Paradise Regained.

Said the dying Christ to the penitent on the cross, "Verily I say unto thee, To-day shalt thou be with Me in Paradise" (Luke XXIII:43). Ere yet our first parents were sent forth from the garden of Eden, as we have seen, Jehovah proclaimed the protevangelium, viz., that the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head. And our blessed Redeemer has "become the Surety of a better covenant" (Heb. VII:22).

“In Him the sons of Adam boast
More blessings than their father lost.”

Regenerated by the Spirit of God man can and does rise again toward heaven and toward God.

This matter of the origin of evil furnishes a problem that man will never be able to wholly solve in this life. Why a holy God permitted sin to enter our fair world, and rob it of its glory; or why He has tolerated it anywhere, who can fully explain?

“Canst thou by searching find out God?
Canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection?”
(Job XI:7.)

“How unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past tracing out!”
(Rom. XI:33.)

But this much we do know, “To this end was the Son of God manifested, that He might destroy the works of the Devil” (I. John III:8). Out of all this wreck and ruin that sin has produced, He will yet bring forth glory eternal to the Triune Jehovah, and endless joy and blessedness to untold millions that have been, and who are yet to be, saved from among the children of men.

Nay more; for by reason of this wondrous scheme of redeeming love, for which there had been no

occasion had not man fallen, the amazing long-suffering, compassion, and boundless love of God, have been displayed before all the universe of being, and in all coming ages Jehovah will show forth, before the principalities and powers in the heavenly places, "the exceeding riches of His grace, in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus" (Eph. II:7). And thus will the melting story of Calvary serve to bind both angels and men in everlasting loyalty, love, and adoration to that marvelous Being of beings, Whose very name is Love.

Nor is even this all. As God did not abandon man hopelessly to the dominion of Satan, neither will He suffer the archfiend to retain his grasp upon this globe, the scene of these millenniums of fierce contention between heaven and hell for the possession of the castle of Mansoul; but He will redeem it gloriously! As the poet has sung, so we need but wait,

"Till one greater Man
Restore us, and regain the blissful seat,"

and then, as Jehovah Himself so solemnly protested to His servant Moses, "all the earth shall be filled with His glory" (Num. XIV:21).

Let us briefly turn to "the word of prophecy" (II. Pet. I:19).

“Thou, Lord, in the beginning didst lay the foundation of the earth;
And the heavens are the works of Thy hands:
They shall perish; but Thou continuest:
And they all shall wax old as doth a garment;
And as a mantle shalt Thou roll them up,
As a garment, and they shall be changed.”
(Heb. I. 10-12.)

“Looking for and earnestly desiring the coming of the day of God, by reason of which the heavens,” i. e., the circumambient atmosphere, not surely the vast sidereal universe, “being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat. But, according to His promise, we look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness” (II. Pet. III:12-13).

“Ask of Me, and I will give Thee the nations for
Thine inheritance,
And the uttermost parts of the earth for Thy possession.
Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron;
Thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter’s vessel.”
(Ps. II:8-9.)

“And there was given Him,” i. e., the “Son of Man,” “dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all the peoples, nations, and languages should serve Him: His dominion is an everlasting dominion,

which shall not pass away, and His kingdom that which shall not be destroyed" (Dan. VII:13, 14). "For the earnest expectation of the creation," i. e., of this whole lower creation, animate and inanimate, "waiteth for the revealing of the sons of God, . . . waiting for our adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body" (Rom. VIII:19, 23). "And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth are passed away; and the sea is no more. And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem," the abode of the triumphant hosts of God's elect, "coming down out of heaven from God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband" (Rev. XXI:1-2). "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Ye shall see the heaven opened, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man" (John I:51). "And He that sitteth on the throne said, Behold, I make all things new" (Rev. XXI:5).

Could language declare more emphatically that man's personal salvation is not only to be complete, but also that his erstwhile lost Paradise shall yet be gloriously restored? Says Scotland's great preacher, Thomas Chalmers, "Though a Paradise of sense, it will not be a Paradise of sensuality. . . . It is not the entire substitution of spirit for matter that will distinguish the future economy from the present.

But it will be the entire substitution of righteousness for sin. . . . There will be a firm earth, as we have at present, and a heaven stretched over it, as we have at present, and it is not by the absence of these, but by the absence of sin, that the abodes of immortality will be characterized.”¹⁶

Well may we cry out with the beloved disciple, in answer to the Master’s blessed assurance, “Yea: I come quickly. Amen: come, Lord Jesus!” (Rev. XXII:20). Oh! let us pray and labor for the “return

Of Him, . . .

The woman’s Seed, . . .

Last, in the clouds, from heaven to be revealed,
In glory of the Father, to dissolve
Satan with his perverted world; then raise
From the conflagrant mass, purged and refined,
New heavens, new earth, ages of endless date,
Founded in righteousness, and peace, and love;
To bring forth fruits, joy, and eternal bliss.”¹⁷

Dear hearer, how many times have you been born? By natural descent, and also, alas! by the actual consent of your own will, and by your every sinful thought and act, you are a child of the first Adam, an outcast from Paradise, and an heir of wrath. Have you been born a second time? Are

¹⁶ Sermon on II. Pet. III:13.

¹⁷ *Paradise Lost*, Book XII, lines 541-551.

you a new creature in Christ Jesus? regenerated by the Holy Spirit? Have you exercised repentance toward God, and have you been joined to Christ by a living faith? Has He, "The last Adam," given you personally a title to the new heavenly Paradise? Are you sealed by the Spirit of the living God until the day of the redemption of our bodies (Eph. IV: 30; Rom. VIII:23), that you may then also go in unto "the marriage supper of the Lamb"? (Rev. XIX:9).

As a child of Adam you are exposed to everlasting woe. Are you then also a child of God in Christ Jesus, saved by His blood, and sanctified by His Spirit, "made meet to be" a partaker "of the inheritance of the saints in light"? (Col. I:12). Oh! how many times have you been born? Only once, or twice? Remember, we beseech you, this word of Scripture, "As many as received Him, to them gave He the right," the authority, "to become children of God, even to them that believe on His name: who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God" (John I:12-13).

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